

# Fire Island Chronicle

Volume III Issue 9

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September 16, 2016

## Work Set To Continue on FIMI Project



Photo credit: Bob Lerch

By Nicole Brems

The FIMI project is set to continue later this month with the next phase of the project (3A- Fair Harbor to Seaview). Great Lakes Dredge and Dock Co. has been awarded the contract. As of now, there isn't an official place the project will pick up. More work needs to be completed at Robert Moses, once that is finished they will be mobilizing to start work in front of the communities.

After Superstorm Sandy, way

back in October 2012, the Fire Island Inlet to Moriches Inlet (FIMI) Stabilization Project was introduced as a way to provide coastal storm risk reduction from coastal erosion and tidal inundation as a one-time, stand-alone project.

According to the website about the project, "The Project will be constructed by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in partnership with their two Non-Federal Sponsors, the New York State Department of Environmen-

tal Conservation (DEC) and Suffolk County (County). FIMI will reestablish protective dunes and beach berms along the Atlantic Coast of Fire Island, from Robert Moses State Park in the west to Moriches Inlet in the east, with exceptions in certain protected federal wilderness areas. All of the FIMI Project is (from Robert Moses State Park to Smith Point County Park) 100% funded by the federal government at \$207,000,000. No local government is paying for any portion of FIMI. The State

is providing \$68,000,000 to Suffolk County to obtain the real estate and the State will be reimbursed by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)."

After many delays, the project finally began in the winter of 2014/2015 at the east end of the island, Smith Point.

continued on next page

# FREE

# FIMI Project Continues

The project continued last winter, completing Robert Moses County Park, the Lighthouse Tract, Kismet and Saltaire.

The last stage of the project, contract 3B (Ocean Bay Park to Davis Park) is currently not thought to be finished this winter, adding yet another year to the project. This last section of the project will have the most complex real estate issues to deal with, as this is the section that is proposed to lose the most homes along the ocean.

According to Fire Island Pines August newsletter, "Most of the owners of impacted houses by FIMI have met with Suffolk County and/or the County's engineering firm, DeBruin." Gil Anderson, the Suffolk County Public Works Commissioner, was hoping to file the drawing packages for the impacted houses with the Brookhaven Building Department at some point in August, which is the first step to getting the group of applications to the Board of Zoning Appeals for review. The date for the hearings hasn't been set as of right now. The newsletter also estimates that the project won't reach the Pines until Fall 2017.

Further east, in Davis Park, we reported last year that the community had worked together with the project coordinators and found a way to move the dune line and the affected houses to avoid losing any. At this point, it is unclear how discussions are going with those homeowners and Suffolk County and any kind of timeline of moving the homes, which would have to take place prior to the sand being placed. In the spring newsletter, the DPA also estimates that the project won't reach the community until next fall.

With many end-of-season community association meetings, we'll soon know more about how the project affects each community. But, at this point, it looks like the project won't be completed until at least five years after the storm that caused its implementation. Just in time for the related FIMP to start. You can read more about the related FIMP project on page 8 of this issue!

## Letter From the Editor

Hello Fire Islanders!  
Happy September!

It might already be September, but summer isn't over yet! The beach is still beautiful and the water is warm, in addition we have been having wonderful weather this month. The seemingly never-ending heat wave of the summer has disappeared and we are left with gorgeous temperatures.

In the next couple of weeks each community will be having their end-of-season community association meetings. Be sure to attend the one in your community so that you're in the know before you depart for the cold winter months. If you can't make it, not to worry- we'll be there and let you know everything that was discussed.

Take some time one day soon and just sit at the beach, close your eyes and listen to the sound of the waves of the ocean crashing, the birds flocking overhead and take some time to appreciate how lucky we all are to call Fire Island our home, whether it's only for a day or for the entire year.

Best,  
Nicole Brems  
Publisher/Editor

## *Fire Island Chronicle*

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# Sybil Sez!

Dear Little Nancy- VOTE!!

Dear Sybil, I'm completely discombobulated about this year's elections! All the hype, the health scares, the hysteria!! Far left, far right, something in the middle?? I know you probably won't tell us where you stand completely on an individual candidate, but do you have ANY advice for your readers? HEEEEELP!!! Sincerely (at a loss!), Gwen.

Dear Gwen, It's not appropriate for me to tell you who I'm voting for in these pages...after all, I'm an "Advice Columnist", not a "Political Pundit"..... (although I have very, VERY strong feelings about a few absolutes this time around.... but I'm sure you can guess where I stand on the political spectrum from left to right!) So here's a little poem that I think sums up one very important thing I can proudly (and even violently!) espouse. And before I show it to you, I want you to think of the movie, *THE WAY WE WERE* (1974). Barbra Streisand's character Katie was certainly a pain-in-the-ass with all her political and philosophical pronouncements, but I too feel that "people are their principles". Robert Redford's Hubbell was handsome and likable, but living in the modern world means taking a stand on issues...always! We can't complain or wring our hands or point fingers if we don't even bother to vote! And I'm afraid I'm rather outspoken, So here's my little ditty, that I hope enlightens, enlivens, and elucidates! ENJOY!

Dear Little Nancy liked to skip and play.  
Did she keep her Promises?  
No one could say.  
Nancy said she'd register to VOTE and do her Duty.  
But Mondays she always devoted to her day of Beauty.  
Tuesdays are for visiting and chatting over Lunch!

Wednesdays are for Shopping and a large Rum Punch!  
And don't you know that Thursday's a fine day to rest?  
And then it's time for Friday!  
Please don't be a Pest!  
Here it is the Weekend, and Friends have come to Town.  
Time to have a Picnic and wear a Gingham Gown.  
Day by Day and Week by Week, her Duty she'd forgotten.

And Folks began to gossip now, her Reputation rotten.  
The months slid by, from Spring to Fall, her Duty ne'er remembered.

And finally it was Voting Day, the first Tuesday in November.

Dear Nancy came to the Polling Place, but was promptly turned away.

The nice Ladies there said, "Your name's not here! You clearly mayn't stay!"  
But Nancy fussed and stamped her Feet and loudly made a Row!

"I care not what y' say to me! I've come to VOTE right now!"

A nice Policeman passing by did seize her by her hair, and swung her high around his Head and threw her through the Air.  
She came down KOOOSH! upon the ground, some 20 feet or so.

An hour later she awoke, quite cross, and moaning low.  
A kindly Lady passing by asked her what was wrong.  
And Nancy told her Tale of woe, which really was much too long.

The Lady smiled and helped her up and invited her to tea.  
"The polls are closed. You did not VOTE. You come along with me."

They walked eleven miles or so, and down a Country lane, And into woods so dark and deep. Then it began to rain.  
Dear Nancy said that she was tired and longed to have a Rest.

The kindly Lady pointed to her Cottage on the Crest.  
They tumbled in out of the rain to get so warm and cozy.



The House was sweet, and very clean and smelled of Spice and Posy.

"Now let me put a Kettle on, and you play with both my kitties.

Their names are Biff and Lancelot! Come along my little pretties!"

Nancy reached out to pet the Pair, but Biff gave her some Nips.

She pulled her bleeding Hand away, and Lancelot licked his lips.

She tried again to be a Friend and promptly got some Scratches.

The Lady then walked in the room and brought a Box of Matches.

"I said before you did not VOTE! You did not pick a Winner!

You did not do your Duty dear, and now you'll be our Dinner!"

The Lady lunged at Nancy then and gave her quite a Fright!

She grabbed her hem, and lit a Match and set her Dress alight.

Dear Nancy jumped and yowled so! Imagine her Dis-may.

It crossed her mind, "It's Tuesday though! It's Lunch and Visit day!"

The Flames leaped higher, higher then and burned her to a Crisp

With little hissing "essing" sounds, (Nance always had a Lisp!)

The Lady stuffed her full of Peas, some Carrots and a Shallot.

Poor Nancy might have saved herself if she'd only cast a Ballot.

She ended up inside their Tummies, don't think me too uncouth.

Just think how much nicer it would have been inside a Voting Booth.

Well that's our tale of Nancy, dear. And Darlings, Please take note!

When Mummie says she loves you so! Now REGISTER AND VOTE!

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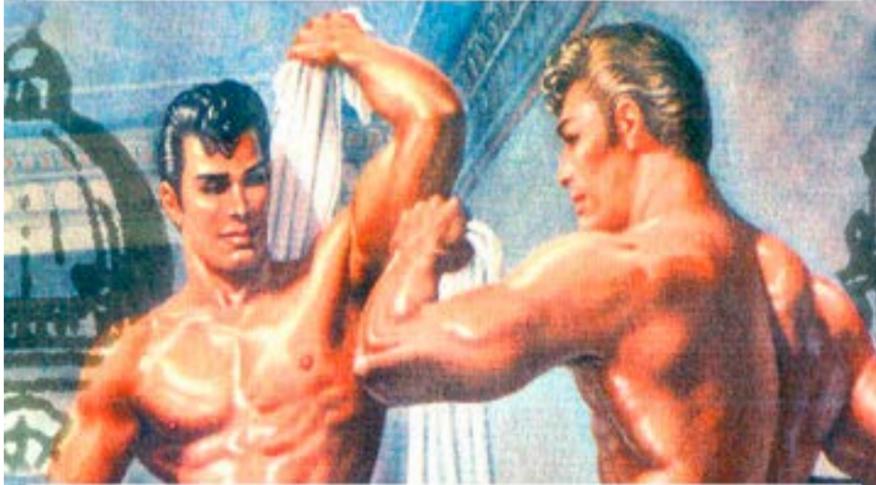
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# Ocean Beach Fishing Club

By Mackenzie Lowry

On Saturday morning, Labor Day Weekend, a flock of persistent children stood on the seaweed-covered docks of Ocean Beach. Sweatshirts protected the kids from the wind as they swung their fishing rods above the rocky waters. When a big wave came, they all hurried to stand up and dash out of the way.

“I saved my goldfish!” One boy cheered, abandoning his rod to swing the snack bag in the air. It’s important to save the fish, as “conservation” is one of the values of the Ocean Beach Fishing Club (OBFC).

On Labor Day Weekend, the OBFC held their annual Catch and Release Contest. Kids under the age of 14 gather on the dock from 8 AM till noon to put their fishing skills to the test, or to try them out for the first time. The fishing supplies are all there for them, as are snacks, OBFC patches, and coupons for free ice cream. Each of the top three fisher-boys and fisher-girls win prizes, and there’s even a special prize for the best fish joke.

This year’s top gags:

“What did the magician say to the fisherman? ‘Pick a cod, any cod.’” -Owen Brahe, OB

“You can tune a piano but you can’t tune a fish.” -Cameron Siegal, Summer Club

The whole event is run by the King of Jokes himself, Woody Salvan. I was sitting at the sign-in table with his daughter, Hope, when he came wandering over with a handful of dead minnows – bait.

“I can’t find the ice cream coupons,” Hope said.

“They’re in that box under the bench,” he pointed with his free hand.

“No, I already checked there.”

Woody turned to the one of the fathers standing in front of our table, asked, “Can you

hold this for a second?” and dropped all his dead fish into the stranger’s hand.

It takes a robust character like Woody to run an event such as this. He has been in charge of the OBFC since 2007 and started the annual contests officially in 2008. The club first began back in 1946 as a men’s-only organization for fishing enthusiasts on the island, including Mel Brooks, who was an original member.

“They were good spirited,” Woody says, “but often did not get along.”

An Ocean Beach resident named Lou Hess ran the organization, but when he died, Woody took over and changed up the rules.

“I thought a lot of the ideas were good and I wanted to preserve the good notions of the club as initially intended: good sportsmanship, conservation, continued learning, sharing ideas and knowledge about saltwater fishing. But I wanted to try to eliminate the negatives. I thought, who but kids could do so?”

No longer would OBFC be a men’s-only club. It became a KIDS-only club, for both boys and girls. The event is completely non-profit and provides an exciting learning experience for the kids. The children from local communities look forward to the event towards the end of every summer.

This year, the whole contest was dedicated to an Ocean Beach resident named Davey, who lost his battle to cancer last year. Davey was an excellent fisher-boy himself, even in his young age. He was known to have knowledge beyond his years. His father, also named Davey, was in attendance at this year’s OBFC Catch and Release Contest. Davey Sr. said when he asked Little Davey his fishing secret, the boy simply responded, “You wiggle it, wiggle i



a little more, pause... and twist.”

At the end of the day, one parent approached Woody to tell him that her son took the ferry at 7:30 in the morning just to attend the fishing contest. He heard the story about Little Davey and had to be at the contest because he himself was a cancer survivor.

Each kid who came to fish received a special “Little Davey Good Guy Award” in the form of a carved fish on a leather strap, preserving his memory and his passion in silver.

The kids did their best to continue Davey’s perseverance and dedication to the sport. By the end of the morning, 80 fisher-boys and -girls had shown up, and over 70 fish were caught. Hayden Green and Clare Farrell were the first place winners, catching

9 and 8 fish, respectively.

“At the end of the contest, we cut loose the bunker chunks only to be entertained by the birds who quickly had a meal,” Woody quipped.

He had a lot of help running the contest, thanks to David Shaver, Hope Salvan, Morgan Salvan, Kevin Conway, Kevin Lowry, and, especially, Scoops (for the kids’ ice cream cones).

The skies may have been gloomy as the docks cleared out, but spirits were high, with hope that the positive ideals of the OBFC will continue and the memory of Little Davey will live on.

Photo credits: Mackenzie Lowry

# On The Wild Side

## STRIPER SEASON

By Charles A Witek III

Days are shorter, nights are cooler, a storm passed by offshore.

Baitfish are beginning to stir. In the waters around Fire Island, striped bass shadow schools of anchovies and sand eels, feeding in the light of September's moon, bulking up in advance of their long journey south.

There aren't too many of them, yet; while stripers stream past Fire Island on their northward migration, most choose not to stay.

They move east to Montauk, Block Island and Nantucket, to Cape Cod's Monomoy and the beaches of Truro, where cooler waters hold squid and herring and big bass can easily feed.

Still, a few stay behind, becoming "resident" bass in the bay and our inlets, and in the ocean along the South Shore. Soon, the migration will begin, as fish from New England begin to trickle back down toward their wintering grounds off North Carolina. Sometime soon, perhaps by mid-October, that trickle will become a flood as most of the striped bass on the East Coast pour past Long Island's shores. So in September, when the northwest wind blows, anglers begin to feel hope.

The bass that stayed in the bay throughout the summer begin to get a little more active, and spend more time seeking food. Out in the ocean, just off Fire Island, stripers shadow schools of menhaden, picking up stragglers and putting on weight. The anglers, too grow more active, fishing from boats and from beaches, always hoping that their very next cast will hook the first bass of the fall.

September bass fishing starts off slowly, awaiting the first

fall nor'easter or the first hard northwest blow. They get the baitfish and the striped bass moving; that's when the fall season begins.

Mullet, a small, blunt-nosed baitfish just a few inches long, are usually the first to exit the inlets. Their exodus marks the first good striper run of the fall. Early in the morning, when Fire Island's dunes shelter the ocean from a northerly wind, small pods of mullet will swim close to shore, so near the surface that their passage sends v-shaped ripples across the skin of the sea.

On ocean beaches, surfcasters fling blue-colored poppers and surface swimmers toward the horizon, retrieving them slowly, trying to copy the sort of disturbance that a swimming mullet might make. From the time that the lure touches down at the end of a cast until it rests in the waters just off the rod's tip, the angler is in a constant state of anticipation, for the next turn of the reel's handle can bring a strike from a fish that might be sub-legal five-pounder or a 20-year-old fish weighing 50 pounds or more.

And that, of course, is the lure of the striper. While most are not giants, some grow pretty large, and can be caught both from boats and from shore. And in both spring and fall, big fish haunt Fire Island. Last June, just off Robert Moses, an angler caught a bass that weighed 62 pounds.

Striped bass are surrounded by an aura of mystery, largely because the best fishing usually takes place at night.

Big fish like big mouthfuls, so many of the largest bass of the year are caught around menhaden schools. Anglers in boats snag the big herring on weighted treble hooks,

then send the wounded baitfish back into the schools, where striped bass view them as easy prey. Other fishermen catch live menhaden in creeks flowing into the bay, then drift them over rough bottom in the inlet and in the bay just off Fire Island, keeping their baits near the bottom where striped bass normally hunt.

Eels can be fished the same way, drifted over and around bottom structure until they're inhaled by feeding bass. They can also be cast from shore, both in the bay, the inlet and the ocean beach, retrieved, very slowly, then cast out again.

It's hard to say whether eels or menhaden are better bass bait; however, while menhaden produce bass at any hour, eels catch more at night.

Many anglers prefer to catch their fish on artificial lures. The same poppers and swimmers that work during the mullet run also work throughout the year. However, boat fishermen find that trolling big diving plugs or shoe-sized "bunker spoons" around menhaden schools is often productive; that's how last June's 62-pound striper was caught. Surfcasters also catch fish on big swimming plugs when menhaden are in the area.

But whether they like to use bait or lures, striped bass anglers are alike in one way: They're always seeking the 50-pound bass that has always been viewed as a trophy.

In recent years, when they catch their big striper, more and more anglers are letting them go.

In part, that's because the meat of big bass can be a little coarse and, because of their menhaden diet, can taste somewhat strong. But many

anglers release the big fish, which are the most prolific spawners, just because it's the right thing to do.

Striped bass fishermen still have a sort of tribal memory, of the days in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when the bass population collapsed. Fisheries managers worked hard to restore the striped bass population after that. It was declared "recovered" in 1995, but forty years later, even younger anglers worry that it could collapse again. That worry is probably justified, as the population has been in decline for more than a decade. However, in late 2014, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, which has the primary responsibility for managing striped bass, put measures in place that should reduce recreational and commercial landings by 25%.

Here in New York, anglers may only keep one striped bass, which must be at least 28 inches long, per day.

Hopefully, the new rules will allow the population rebuild. For the striped bass is a fish to be treasured, an icon of Long Island's coast that is cherished by anglers and diners alike.

They are far too precious to lose.

# Island Roots

## Tales From Fire Island People

### Zois and the Bay Girl

By Mackenzie Lowry

Ocean Beach on the weekend is a land of drunken escapades. Strangers stumbling into random homes to fall asleep on the couch, others trying to steal a piece of barbecue chicken pizza from the Town Pizza side door, and some snagging bikes out of yards to speed through the few blocks to the last boat.

John Zois, OBPD, is used to dealing with this kind of thing: public intoxication, bar fights, etc. But after one relatively usual August evening, the station phone rang with an unusual case.

It was 4:50 AM. The callers were tenants in the apartment above Michael's Piz-

zeria, reporting a break in: a confused blonde girl had come inside and was stumbling around the apartment with knives. She was intoxicated and obviously very disoriented, but the two tenants were spooked. They weren't sure what she might do next.

Zois rushed to the scene with two other officers. He took one up with him to talk to the tenants while the other officer stayed downstairs watching the girl, who no longer had the knives at this point. While Zois was getting the story, he heard a commotion downstairs. The other officer yelled up to him: the suspect booked it and was running up the block towards The Mermaid.

Zois and the other officers were on a police chase through town as the sun started to peek out above the water. They zipped around the corner, just on her tail, chased her past The Mermaid, and cornered her at the end of the dock. Just when they thought they had her, she jumped into the bay and started swimming.

She got about 60 yards and then stopped, tired out. Zois called a marine boat and they said they could be there to pick her up in about 10 minutes. Easy catch.

But 10 minutes was too long. She started gurgling and struggling, slipping under the surface. Her arms flailed and splashed in the bay wa-

ter. Suspect or not, this girl wasn't about to die on OBPD watch. Zois quickly stripped out of his uniform and dove into the bay, swimming out to the drowning girl. He grabbed her just in time and swam her back to the freight dock. He hoisted her up to find that she was verbal and conscious, but not alert and very tired. They carried her back to the station, where she got the opportunity to sober up and Zois got a chance to dry off.

Stopping crime and saving lives - it's all in a night's work for John Zois and OBPD.

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# Fire Island Inlet to Montauk Point Project Schedules Public Meetings

By Nicole Brems

The Fire Island Inlet to Montauk Point (FIMP) Project has extended the public comment period until October 19th and in addition, they have scheduled public hearings over the next week to discuss the many components of the project, including the Draft General Re-evaluation Report (GRR) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The project provides for long-term hurricane protection and beach erosion control along the south shore of Long Island, between the Fire Island Inlet and Montauk Point, a distance of about 83 miles. The project, sponsored by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, also authorizes Federal participation in periodic nourishment.

The project, which is currently in a reformulation period, has a long history. According to the website for the project, "In 1978, the Department of the Interior (DOI) supported by other agencies referred the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the authorized project to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) as unacceptable. In June 1978, CEQ recommended project reformulation to the Chief of Engineers, who in turn directed the District to reformulate the project. Reformulation was originally initiated in 1980; however, because of difficulties between the Federal, State and County in proceeding with the Westhampton reach, which at the time was the most vulnerable reach of the authorized project, the Reformulation was suspended. Based on letters of intent to support an interim plans, the Reformulation study was resumed in 1994. Work on

the Reformulation study is currently ongoing, with several interim projects already constructed for critical vulnerable areas."

The project has completed multiple stabilization projects across the affected area, including what they refer to as Fire Island Stabilization, also known as FIMI. The breach contingency plan, which has kept the new inlet, created by Superstorm Sandy open, is also part of FIMP. The inlet is monitored on an ongoing basis by NPSNYS to determine if it will close naturally or if it will be necessary to close the breach via a contract action. The same plan closed two other inlets formed during Sandy, including one in Cupogue County Park and another at Smith Point, both of which were closed by the end of 2012.

The importance of this project is seen when you look at the history of the area in terms of tropical storms and hurricanes. Records show that 24 hurricanes have affected the New York area in the past century; the heaviest storm damage usually occurs when high astronomical tides and storm surges coincide (like during Superstorm Sandy).

On September 21, 1938, the hurricane known as the Long Island Express hit the area. The storm severely damaged both Fire Island and mainland areas. Over 700 homes on Fire Island were damaged, nearly 300 were completely destroyed. Twelve new inlets were formed along the south shore barrier beaches. Twenty square miles of Long Island was inundated as storm tides took over Fire Island and just kept going. At the time, there was low population numbers living on the south shore of

the mainland, resulting in minimal damages. But, these areas have since become built up and house more people than ever before. Estimates show in today's world approximately 8,500 structures on the mainland would be under up to six feet of water, and that's not including the potentially irreparable damage to the entirety of Fire Island.

Another notable storm for Fire Island occurred in March of 1962. A total of 50 washovers occurred in the area. On Fire Island a total of 47 homes were destroyed and 75 were damaged. On the mainland, twelve square miles were under water, today that would be equivalent to about 4,500 structures that would be under water.

Four severe storms event in the 1990s resulted in the federal disaster declarations for Suffolk County, causing over \$14 million in damages to public infrastructure.

It's very easy for people to think that the Hurricane of 1938 and Superstorm Sandy were so-called "100-year storms," but over the next 50 years, sea levels are forecast to continue rising, resulting in more frequent and severe storm damage. This will result in more frequent and more severe storm damage across the area.

Whether you agree with the project's previous works or not, one thing is for sure-something needs to be done to protect this island that so many love. Be sure to attend one of the public hearings and make sure that your voice is heard.

The next meeting is Tuesday, September 20 at the Patchogue-Watch Hill Ferry Terminal located at 150 West

Avenue Patchogue, NY. Two meetings the following week are Tuesday, September 27 at the Southampton Campus of Stony Brook University, location TBA and Wednesday September 28 at Montauk Playhouse. All the meetings are scheduled for 6:00-8:30pm. You can also email your comments to project biologist Robert.j.smith@usace.army.mil or the project manager at mark.f.lulka@usace.army.mil. But remember- you only have until October 19th to make sure your voice is heard.