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## FEATURES

### YEAR IN REVIEW PART 1

01/04/2007 12:00 pm

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#### Our Country 'Tis Of Thee

The United States—what a country. We sometimes forget that the things we love so much about America are the things that we also dislike, but we do have the freedom to say so. Above all this year, we saw that voters do have a voice, and judging from the midterm election results, they wanted their voices heard. There is never a shortage of news in America. Here are just a few of the top stories.

#### 2008 Election

Who's it gonna be? Rudy? McCain? Hillary? The histrionics that surround a presidential election year are going to seem amplified in 2008, as President George W. Bush comes to the end of his second term and leaves the White House for the taking. Although 2008 may seem a ways off, the jockeying has been going on for some time. The GOP, looking to rebound after the crushing 2006 mid-term race, has been letting the buzz about U.S. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani grow. Rudy became "America's Mayor" after the Twin Towers fell, and has remained in the private sector (making boatloads of cash) since leaving office. But after the findings of the 9/11 Commission the shine is off Rudy. McCain is a stalwart man, a Vietnam vet and former prisoner of war. But is it Hillary's turn? If you live in California or New York, it may seem like an easy "yes" answer—but is the Midwest ready for a female president? And then there's Obama. Stay tuned. This will be a great show.

#### 9/11 Rebuild

A new 1,776-foot Freedom Tower is rising from the rubble. Emotional family members, joined by then-New York Gov. George Pataki, have signed and dedicated the steel columns.

#### 9/11 Recover

Since late October, some 200 human bones have been found in a manhole at Ground Zero, prompting a search of buildings, rooftops and other manholes. More than 700 bone fragments and remains were found in the past year in one nearby damaged building.

#### 9/11 Rescue

Workers who spent hours, days and months searching through the World Trade Center rubble have been diagnosed with a plethora of diseases that many physicians say resulted from dust exposure at the site. The disorders include blood cell and other rare cancers, respiratory problems and lung ailments. White Plains attorney David Worby represents some 8,500 people who have come forward with health problems. His clients are suing New York City, its contractors and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

#### Karr-azy!

After about a decade of finger-pointing and speculation, an arrest was made in the brutal murder of 6-year-old JonBenet Ramsey. After being arrested last August on five-year-old child pornography charges in Bangkok, Thailand, former schoolteacher John Mark Karr said that he was with the young beauty pageant contestant when she died just after Christmas in 1996, but claimed her death was an accident. The world watched in outrage as the ultra-thin 41-year-old was flown to Boulder, Colo. Less than two weeks after his confession, it was found that Karr's DNA didn't match any samples found at the crime scene,



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and Karr's public defender said that no charges would be filed. While many continue to assume that JonBenet's parents were involved in her death, the case is still unsolved. This past year also saw the death of JonBenet's mother, Patsy, who died from ovarian cancer two months before Karr's arrest.

#### **Finger-Pointing Continues In Intelligence Leak**

Even though former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage shouldered the blame for leaking the identity of former undercover CIA operative Valerie Plame in a conversation with columnist Robert Novak on July 8, 2003, the Bush administration is not in the clear. The preliminary stages of the trial of Vice President Dick Cheney's former Chief of Staff, Lewis "Scooter" Libby, for perjury and obstruction of justice have surged forward since November 2005, with a full trial scheduled to begin in January 2007. Meanwhile, speculation continued that Plame's identity had been revealed as retribution against her husband, former Ambassador Joe Wilson, who had written a New York Times op-ed piece that was published on July 6, 2003, that cast doubt on the intelligence that led the Bush administration to invade Iraq. While deliberately revealing the name of a CIA operative can be a crime, Libby has been charged only with lying to federal agents. But Valerie Plame Wilson and Joe Wilson did file a federal lawsuit in July 2006, charging Cheney, Libby and presidential adviser Karl Rove with conspiracy to leak her identity.

#### **Oy! OJ!**

In the most shocking turn of events since his acquittal of the 1994 murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman, it was announced in mid-November that OJ Simpson was to appear in a Fox television interview with ReganBooks Publisher Judith Regan of News Corporation's HarperCollins. The interview was to air two days before the Nov. 30 release of the former football star's book *If I Did It*, a supposedly fictional story about what would've happened if he had indeed killed his ex-wife and her friend. Amid a frenzy of public outcry, News Corporation, Fox network's owner, announced a week later that it had canceled the TV special and publication of the book, and would remove and destroy all copies. Regan was soon fired.

#### **Fighting An Epidemic**

After it was passed by the Senate, and then held up by Rep. Joe Barton (R-Tex.), the House was shamed into passing the Combating Autism Bill on Dec. 7. On Dec. 19, President Bush signed the landmark Combating Autism Act of 2006 (S. 843). The bill authorizes nearly \$1 billion (\$945 million, to be exact) over the next five years to combat autism through research, screening, early detection and early intervention, increasing federal spending by 50 percent. Considering 1 in 166 children are being diagnosed with the disease, the money—and awareness—is way overdue and most valuable.

#### **America Gets the Blues**

In the elections that were largely seen as a referendum on the war in Iraq, Democratic candidates were able to take back the House on Election Day, and, after a nail-biter in Virginia, the Senate as well. Locally, national Democratic candidates swept the major races in New York, with the exception of the 3rd District Congressional race, where Nassau Legis. Dave Mejias (D-Farmingdale) ultimately came up short in a battle against incumbent U.S. Rep. Peter King (R-Seaford). When the dust settled in the statewide races, Eliot Spitzer had become New York's next governor, and U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton easily defeated her Republican opponent (whose name we've already forgotten) for the Senate, beginning speculation about a 2008 presidential run for the wildly popular Democrat.

#### **Ports Plight**

In this post-9/11 world, selling the port management responsibilities of six major Northeast states to a country with ties to 9/11 attackers could be seen as a bad move. But that's what the Bush administration did in January by allowing Dubai Ports World, which is owned by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) government, to acquire the operations. Because two of the 9/11 hijackers were from the UAE, according to the 9/11 Commission Report, and some of the money that financed the attacks had been run through UAE banks, the deal wrought fury

all around as Republican and Democratic members of Congress publicly spoke out against the sale, while some Arabs accused the U.S. government of racism. However, commentators Rush Limbaugh and Bill O'Reilly defended the move, and Dubya threatened to veto legislation blocking the transaction. Despite lobbying and uproar from pretty much everybody, the deal went through, but in December, Dubai Ports World sold those operations to U.S.-based American International Group's Global Investment Group for a price rumored to be at least \$700 million.

#### **Rumsfeld/Gates**

Oh, Rummy, say it ain't so! The day after November's crushing mid-term election defeat handed to the GOP by the Democrats in both Congress and the Senate, much-maligned Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld stepped aside, signaling Bush's decision to wave a white flag and begin to listen to the other side about the rudderless Iraq war. Rumsfeld was a White House veteran, also serving under Presidents Nixon and Ford, and became famous for flippant and acerbic quips in press conferences. His departure left the door open for Robert Gates. Gates has had an interesting career, serving as CIA director under George H.W. Bush and as president of a major university, and almost headed up Homeland Security. Gates is well versed in the Iraq war, and 2007 will be a pivotal year for Washington as the future of U.S. involvement in Iraq is decided.

#### **Tragedy At The Mine**

It was a normal day of work for 13 coal miners in the West Virginia town of Sago on Jan. 2, when a methane explosion trapped them underground. The families of the miners, along with the entire country, waited to hear good news. When rescue crews reached the miners, there was confusion among media outlets about how many miners actually survived. It was originally reported that 12 of the 13 had made it out alive, but only Randal L. McCloy Jr., the youngest of the miners at 26, lived through the 41-hour ordeal. Anger erupted from the dead miners' families, who had originally been told at a nearby church that all but one of the 13 had survived, only to be forced to face the grim reality. The families' reaction was later intensified by reports that the mine had piled up 208 serious safety violations in 2005.

#### **Global Warming: Believe the Hype**

In his first tangible public grandstanding since his failed 2000 presidential run, former Vice President Al Gore re-emerged in May as the self-appointed spokesman on global warming with his documentary and companion book, *An Inconvenient Truth*. While using hard scientific data to describe a predicted catastrophe, the film tried to stir up a movement and push the issue to the forefront. And the points taken—that carbon dioxide levels are higher than they've been in the past 650,000 years, temperatures are hotter than they've been in 15 years, and rising sea levels could swamp Manhattan—were alarming. Although his mission succeeded temporarily, attention faded, and the issue was once again on the back burner by election season.

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#### **What A Wild World**

It's hard to say where we are at in terms of a civilized world, because when you look back at a year and see what has happened around the world, it can leave a person wondering. This past year was no different. From the war torn streets of Iraq, to the hangman's gallows, to the blood stained roads of Darfur, it's clear that we live in sad, confusing times. We at the Press are hoping to have a lighter list next year.

#### **The Hangman Hangs**

It seems surreal that he's really gone. After a trial by the new Iraqi government, former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, the Butcher of Baghdad, was hanged in the pre-dawn hours of December 29th. Yet despite his hanging for the massacre of 148 Sunni villagers in 1988, the war rages on. Hussein will be a study in Middle Eastern history. He came to power amidst fear and murder, and ruled with brutality and no remorse. At one time, he was an ally of the United States as his country fought neighboring Iran, but fell out of favor forever after his 1990 invasion of Kuwait, which began the Persian Gulf War. Hussein never disappeared from the view the US, but he became the

second most wanted man (Osama Bin Laden being number one) after September 11. Although we never did find his WMD's, there is no doubt that this was a frightening, murderous leader. What his death will mean to the country of Iraq, and the rest of the world, will probably not be clear for many years.

#### **The Ghosts of Darfur**

Darfur, a poor region of the Western Sudan that is home mainly to black Muslim African farmers, has been besieged by violence since 2003. Fighting erupted when Darfur's people attacked its government after demands for representation were unmet. The government-backed Arab militia (Janjaweed), retaliated with what has been labeled ethnic cleansing and genocide. Some 400,000 black Africans are dead and 2.5 million displaced to refugee camps. In 2006, violence intensified, despite the presence of 7,000 African Union (AU) peacekeepers. Even with international pressure and threatened sanctions, the government has dishonored its promise to disarm the Janjaweed. Escalating violence prompted the United Nations to propose sending 17,300 troops to bolster the ill-equipped AU force, but Sudan, an Islamic state, depicts the peacekeepers as colonial forces and refuses them entry. The U.S. government recently told Sudanese leaders that they would face unspecified action unless the government agrees by Dec. 31 to accept the hybrid force to protect its population. Ban Ki-moon, who will become United Nations secretary-general on Jan. 1, 2007, announced that he will be "directly engaged" in Darfur peacekeeping efforts.

#### **Cuba...Redux**

The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Bay of Pigs seem so long ago. All the footage is in black and white. But the man behind the tyranny and communist rule of Cuba, 80-year-old Fidel Castro, still lives, and in 2006 it did not look like he would be the leader for much longer. Since 1961, he has led the country, accused of torturing and imprisoning thousands that defied his rule. Now, his brother Raul is acting president. As recently as December, 2006, the U.S. continued to ignore Raul Castro's request to sit down and hash out the over 40 years' worth of conflict between the two countries. Raul's impending rule is seen as nothing more than an extension of his brother's brutal dictatorship. It will prove to be a major wrinkle in US foreign policy in the near future.

#### **The Fundamentals of Fundamentalism**

The modern understanding of what Islamic Fundamentalism is sometimes traced back the 1970s and the rise in power of the former leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini. Since then, every major act of terrorism and violence that is carried out by members of Islam has been pegged on 'fundamentalism'. While right or wrong, the evidence exists that there is a fanatical dedication to the movement, and there is no gray area. Take, for example the fervor over a Danish newspaper publishing a cartoon depicting Mohammed. The illustration set off international fighting, riots in the streets in Europe and the Middle East and thousands of TV hours debating whether this type of thing is, in fact, 'offensive'. The point is, most people do not react with the ferocity of hardcore Islamic fundamentalists, and the movement is considered to be just about the number one threat to security around the world.

#### **Any End in Sight for Iraq?**

Sadly, it seems that every year the same can be said for the previous 12 months in war torn Iraq. Things are not going well. Late this year, the US death toll in Iraq surpassed the number of people killed on September 11, 2001, the catalyst for this war, and December was the bloodiest month of 2006. The world held its breath as the conflict brought the country to the brink of all-out civil war, the deaths of thousands more civilians, and the resolve of President George Bush to "stay the course." Former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was convicted of crimes against the Iraqi people in November, and sentenced to hang, a move some think might be the tipping point to civil war. But anti-war sentiment might get a new life. The incoming Democratic majority in the House and Senate following November's mid-terms might start to alter the future of U.S. involvement in Iraq.

#### **The Conflict Continues: Israel vs. Lebanon**

It was started on purpose, and quickly escalated into a brief but

bloody war. It even has a name: in Lebanon, it is known as the 'July War', and in Israel, the 'Second Lebanon War'. In early July, after Hezbollah launched rockets into Israel to create a diversion for a unit to cross into Israel and kidnap several Israel soldiers. After a failed, and bloody, attempt on Israel's part to liberate their soldiers, the war began with vicious air strikes, a naval blockade and ground invasion by Israel. More than 1,400 people were killed, the majority Lebanese civilians. The war brought Israeli citizens from around the world to fight, but the conflict was over by early August, and reminded the world that it will not take much to plummet the region into all-out war, and any cease fire is temporary.

#### **Testing: one, two, ...: North Korea Goes Nuclear**

When North Korea's official news agency, the Korean Central News Agency, announced that the country had conducted its first nuclear test on Oct. 9, officials around the world scrambled first to verify the information, then plan their reaction. For one hot minute, it seemed as though the world was back in the Cold War days, with commentators conducting 24-hour newscasts and alliances being pledged across borders. But after a few weeks, the tension died down, due in part to the Bush administration's ongoing focus on Iraq. Ironically, diplomatic relations between North and South Korea seemed to reach an all-time high recently, when on Dec. 8 North Korea handed its southern neighbors a gigantic olive branch, backing the bid of South Korean city Pyongyang for the 2014 Winter Olympics—if, given the new nuclear landscape, the world makes it to 2014.

#### **Death Of A Dictator**

To say that the death of former Chilean President Gen. Augusto Pinochet Ugarte was met with mixed reaction would be the understatement of the year. His admirers were angered that the country's left-leaning government denied the dictator the honor of a full state funeral reserved for former presidents. But protesters drowned out the choir during the funeral service, recalling the terror imposed by Pinochet during his rule from 1973 to 1990, when he ordered the torture and killing of thousands. A ruthless villain to some, and ultimate savior to others, he will nevertheless be remembered for engaging Chile in the world economy, taking it from a developing country to a true market participant. But his gross human rights abuses will ultimately tarnish his memory in the eyes of Chileans who recall the more horrific elements of his regime.

#### **Zarqawi Is Dead**

A deadly air strike by U.S. warplanes on Baghdad in June found its target: Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq. Believed to be responsible for numerous acts of terrorism, the Sunni leader had been hiding in a safe house with his teenaged wife and one of his children. Zarqawi, 39, reportedly suffered massive internal bleeding and died shortly after the strike. The only thing more dramatic about Zarqawi's death was the New York Post cover, which featured a photograph of Zarqawi's dead body with the headline "GOTCHA!" and a cartoon speech bubble saying, "Warm up the virgins," a comical reference to terrorists reward when killed in the line of "duty." As U.S. and Iraqi casualties continue unabated each month, some may wonder if Zarqawi's death accomplished anything.

#### **Spies Vs. Spy**

The story unfolds like a James Bond movie, but has more characters and confusion than Tolstoy's works. On Nov. 1, Alexander Litvinenko, 43, former agent of Russia's FSB, successor to the KGB, dined in London with Italian academic and security expert Mario Scaramella. Scaramella reportedly shared information with Litvinenko about the murder of Litvinenko's friend Anna Politkovskaya, a Russian journalist and scrutinizing critic of the war in Chechnya who had been shot in Moscow on Oct. 7. After his sushi dinner, Litvinenko, a British citizen and Kremlin critic, developed poisoning from polonium-210, which is not normally found in California rolls. Before he died, Litvinenko accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of poisoning him. Many who had contact with Litvinenko developed radioactive poisoning, including Scaramella and Russian businessman Dmitry Kovtun. The plot thickened when others who had met with Kovtun in Germany were diagnosed with radiation poisoning, and traces of radioactivity turned up in several buildings. Scaramella was later arrested in Italy, under suspicion of arms trafficking, ensuring the story will continue well into 2007.

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### **In Our Backyard—2006**

It's never boring on our golden shores. This past year presented Long Islanders with a range of news that CNN would envy. From in-the-trenches political battles to high-profile murder cases, it seems to be a utopia for news junkies. Here is a glimpse of some of the biggest stories of 2006.

#### **Balboni Jumps Ship**

Republicans are not generally known for taking a leap to the other side. But late last year, GOP faithful were stunned when NYS Sen. Michael Balboni (R-East Williston) accepted Gov. Eliot Spitzer's offer to head up the State Department on Homeland Security. Balboni had been the head of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security since 2001, and built up a solid reputation on both sides of the aisle in his efforts to keep the state safe. After walking away from a possible gubernatorial run or campaign for NYS Attorney General, Balboni stayed put in the Senate, easily winning reelection. But being tapped by the No. 1 Democrat in the state should prove to be a great move for Balboni, who can now distance himself from a GOP that seems ready to explode in Albany. The move will also make the next election cycle more interesting, as several people will be vying for Balboni's seat.

#### **Peter King vs. Dave Mejias**

While it seems annoying to see the cliché used again, it truly was a David and Goliath scenario as Nassau Leg. Dave Mejias (D-Farmingdale) threw his hat in the ring and did the dance with Washington megastar Rep. Peter King (R-Seaford). King, a powerful GOP personality, was the head of the Homeland Security committee and a close ally of President Bush, a fact that Mejias used over and over to drive home the thought that King was a Bush crony. King was painted as a Washington insider who had lost touch with his constituency and instead kowtowed to the highest levels of the Bush administration. In the end, the voters did not buy Mejias' argument, and he was soundly defeated, but no matter—King's party was crushed in the mid-term, he lost his committee assignment and Mejias built solid name recognition locally and in the national party. It may be too soon to call it, but this could be a rematch worth watching.

#### **The Undoing of Stony Brook Hospital**

Until 2006, Stony Brook University Medical Center seemed to do very little wrong. It is one of the premier health care institutions in the the country, and also a leader in many different fields. That is why it came as a surprise to many when the hospital came under heavy fire in 2006 from the state in the wake of the deaths of three children in the spring and early summer, and then closed the hospital's pediatric cardiac surgery operations. A report released by the state also resulted in \$72,000 in fines, plus 36 violations. But supporters of the hospital have railed against the investigations at the local, state and federal levels that have come about since the sad passing of the three children. It will prove to be a tough year looming for the hospital as it seeks to rebuild its lost program and its sullied reputation.

#### **The Big One that Wasn't**

We were warned. We were told to be prepared. The Big Storm is coming. It's our time. But in the end, the massive hurricane season of 2006 did not show, as experts predicted, and once again we are left to wonder if we are ready at all. After the world saw the devastation of Katrina, it has become painfully obvious that if a major storm like the 1938 hurricane (the Long Island Express) ever does bear down on our shores, Long Island will be devastated in unimaginable ways. Expect similar warnings in 2007—and beyond—until we do see the next big storm. Just be ready.

#### **Cable Wars**

When Verizon had the novel idea to upgrade its LI Internet and phone service to include cable TV in 2006, no one could have suspected (mostly) enthusiastic reaction from Long Islanders who had grown tired of Cablevision's stronghold over the cable TV and Internet

market. Verizon's entry into the LI market was fraught with dramatic town hall meetings and politicians lining up on both sides, both claiming to support the consumer's right to choose. When the dust settled, Verizon was able to win franchise agreements for its new fiber-optic-based FiOS service in many LI towns, including Hempstead, Huntington, Oyster Bay and Smithtown. It appears that for LI cable consumers, the intruder that promised them cable choice is here to stay.

#### **What now, Mr. Suozzi?**

Anyone who has followed the career of Nassau County Executive Tom Suozzi was not surprised that he decided to mount a campaign to be the governor of New York. The problem is his opponent was NYS Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, a man with a reputation as big as his bank account (um, that's very big). Spitzer was the heir apparent, and the New York State Democratic Party made that very clear in the early going. But Suozzi just doesn't take no for an answer. In 2001, he beat NYS Assemb. Thomas DiNapoli (D-Great Neck) in the Democratic primary for county executive. But Suozzi's success could not translate to the big stage, and he was seen as a turncoat and outcast of the state party. Spitzer, of course, moved into the governor's mansion this month. Suozzi has a lot of kissing up to do to make sure Albany will continue to help Nassau County.

#### **Bring them Home**

On Sept. 29, a corporate jet crashed into a Boeing 737 over Brazil, sending the massive plane into the thick jungle below and killing all of the 154 people on board. The corporate jet landed safely. However, the nightmare for the two jet pilots began that day. Besides having the crash on their conscience, the pilots, Bay Shore's Joseph Lepore, and Lan Paladino of Westhampton Beach, were held in Brazil for more than two months while Brazilian authorities investigated the deadly crash. Although defense investigations revealed a woefully inadequate air-traffic safety system in the skies above Brazil, the pilots were charged with unsafe flying, but it is doubtful they will have to face trial in Brazil. The nightmare is not completely over, as civil suits have been filed against the pilots and the manufacturer of the aircraft.

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#### **Long Island's Most Infamous Of 2006**

*By Timothy Bolger*

How can a place with so many beautiful beaches, parks and people have such weird stuff happen every year? This is never an easy list for the Press to compile. We have to sift through too many strange stories to come up with just 10. But here are 2006's headline-busters. Let's hope for a calmer 2007.

#### **Fatal Arrow Arc**

An arrow shot through the heart of Juan Carlos Muñoz brought notoriety to Mastic earlier this year when experienced deer hunter Thomas Sirico let go the fatal shot from his unconventional murder weapon. Mastic resident Sirico, 35, later testified that he had been drinking and was arguing with a roommate on Jan. 8, when neighbors across the street made comments that angered him. Muñoz, 27, who lived nearby, was visiting the neighbors when he wound up in the defendant's sights. The defense claimed that the bowman's prosthetic leg had caused him to stumble and accidentally fire the arrow from his compound bow. In December, jurors found Sirico guilty of second-degree murder of the father of three. Sirico will be looking at 25 years to life in prison at his January sentencing.

#### **The War On Booze**

Alcohol spilled into the headlines of many stories this year, with new Nassau District Attorney Kathleen Rice starting in office with a declaration of a drunk-driving epidemic. But despite her establishing a DWI court and acquiring alcohol-monitoring devices for repeat offenders, tragedies poured in: An elderly priest was fatally struck in July by an East Hampton repeat drunk driver. In August, a Nassau County Police inspector was arrested and fired for allegedly driving drunk. A month later, a rookie NYPD officer lost control of her car in Wantagh and her passenger, a fellow rookie, was killed. The driver was found to be intoxicated. And in Long Beach, school officials plan to use a Breathalyzer on students in school who appear intoxicated.

The city council passed a law in August cracking down on parents who let underage kids drink in their home. To top it all off, the Long Island Rail Road, which prohibits alcohol on trains on St. Patrick's Day and New Year's Eve, is debating making the ban a year-round policy.

### **Dethroned**

This year marked the speedy descent from power broker to inmate for disgraced former Islip Town Supervisor Peter McGowan. In February, Suffolk District Attorney Thomas Spota seized the Republican leader's \$1 million campaign fund during a public corruption bureau investigation. A month later, McGowan, 69, resigned, the same day he pleaded guilty to three felonies: bribe receiving, grand larceny and offering a false instrument for filing—as well as a misdemeanor charge of witness tampering for taking kickbacks and spending his re-election money on fine dining, spa treatments and vacations. In May, he was sentenced to three months in jail, 420 hours of community service and five years of probation. He served only 56 days in the county jail, celebrating his 70th birthday while incarcerated, and was released in July to start community service at a homeless shelter. Now stripped of his power, influence and million-dollar campaign fund, McGowan is resigned to obscurity. Democrat Phil Nolan was elected to replace him in November.

### **Kill Thy Neighbor**

By far the most horrific crime scene on Long Island this year rocked the Cove Landing gated community in August when the dismembered body parts of retired schoolteacher Denice Fox were discovered in trash containers in the basement of a neighbor's home. The discovery ended the manhunt that had been launched after the 57-year-old victim's daughter discovered what police called "a great deal of blood" in her house and reported her mother missing, and carving knives were found in the victim's home. An hour later, Evan Marshall, 31, returned to his mother Jacqueline Marshall's home, where he was living while on leave after a four-month stay as a mental-health patient upstate in Brewster at Supervised Lifestyles Residential (SLS). Cops later found the victim's head in the trunk of the car Marshall was driving. Marshall, accused of forcing his way into Fox's home to kill her, pleaded not guilty to the first-degree murder charge. The state Office of Mental Health fined SLS in early November for serious regulatory violations and ordered the facility not to accept new patients. No trial date has been set for Marshall.

### **L.I.'s Enron**

Two years after his federal indictment, Sanjay Kumar, 44, the former chief executive officer of Islandia-based software firm Computer Associates, pleaded guilty in April along with former worldwide sales head Stephen Richards, 41, to securities fraud, perjury and obstruction of justice. An FBI, U.S. Attorney's Office and Securities and Exchange Commission investigation had uncovered the \$2.2 billion accounting scheme, which inflated quarterly earnings to meet Wall Street expectations in 1999 and 2000. The pleas came just two weeks before a trial was set to begin. The company, the world's fifth largest software provider with 15,000 employees, paid \$225 million in restitution to shareholders, and on Nov. 2, Kumar received a 12-year sentence. Former CEO Charles Wang, who stepped down in 2002, remained unscathed.

### **Fall Into The Gap**

Following the August death of Minnesota teen Natalie Smead, who fell into a 6- to 8-inch gap between the train and platform at the Long Island Rail Road Woodside station, federal and state officials initiated a system-wide investigation. Smead tried to crawl to safety under the platform but was killed by a train on the other side. State officials blamed the 18-year-old's death on her being drunk, but gap-related injuries have been piling up—including a September fall by 82-year-old former New York State Sen. Carol Berman. Despite there being no standard for a maximum gap size, according to the state's Public Transportation Safety Report, the LIRR started moving the tracks closer to the platforms at Woodside and other stations, and Syosset riders, protesting a 15-inch gap, lobbied to reopen a former station. After a blitz of gap news, riders finally stopped confusing the "Watch the Gap" signs for clothing ads.



**Roslyn: That's A Wrap**

Following what has been called the biggest school spending scandal in U.S. history, with more than \$11 million embezzled by administrators to pay for Caribbean vacations, mortgages, furniture, jewelry and cash bank withdrawals from 1996 to 2004, sentences were handed down. In January, former accountant Andrew Miller was given four months in jail and five years probation. In March, Stephen Signorelli, who received lavish gifts from his lover, Roslyn School Superintendent Frank Tassone, was sentenced to one to three years in prison. In March, John McCormick, a contractor who inspired the original investigation when he ran up an \$80,000 bill on a Roslyn school credit card at Home Depot, was the last to plead guilty and sentenced to 100 hours of community service and five years' probation. Then in September, Pamela Gluckin, McCormick's mother and former school business superintendent, was sentenced to three to nine years in prison. After missing numerous sentencing dates, Tassone was arrested and handcuffed to a hospital bed, where he had been hospitalized for a possible heart condition. He received four to 12 years in prison.

**Samurai Slasher Trial**

This is the kind of case that is the stuff of made-for-TV movies. Zachary Gibian, the 20-year-old stepson of retired New York City Police officer Scott Nager, nearly decapitated his stepfather with a samurai sword in Nager's Hauppauge home in February 2005, saying that the victim, 51, had forced him to perform sex acts. The swordsman even went so far as to testify at his December 2006 trial that his mother, Laura Gibian, 49, committed the murder after she walked in on her husband sexually abusing her son. That defense didn't work, however, and after a near mistrial, jurors found Zachary guilty. He now faces 25 years in prison at his January sentencing for killing Nager. His mother, who suffers from multiple sclerorisis, was not present for her son's trial, but also could face charges for allegedly aiding in the murder.

**Abduction Alerts**

For one week in Suffolk, parents were seriously considering locking up their children after two young girls were abducted within five days of one another. First, a 10-year-old girl was snatched off of her bike in Hauppauge, bound with duct tape and thrown into the backseat of a car. The attacker then freed the girl a short distance away. But on the night that Suffolk police arrested Michael Burkhardt, 30, of Nesconset for that kidnapping, a 15-year-old girl was abducted at gunpoint while jogging in Kings Park. The victim in that case was sexually assaulted by her attacker, who she described as muscular and wearing a security guard uniform. No suspects have been arrested in that case. Burkhardt is awaiting trial.

**Couple Attacked in Bay Shore**

In what was frequently referred to as one of the most horrifying and brutal attacks in recent memory, although it occurred at the end of 2005, a young couple was robbed and beaten while on their first date in Bay Shore. The 23-year-old woman was sodomized by two of her attackers while her date was restrained. Both were stripped naked. This year, 18-year-old homecoming king Douglas Payton pleaded guilty to first-degree rape, sodomy and robbery, as did codefendant Reginald Dugue, 19, but not Terrance Terrell, 18. While describing the crime in court at an August hearing, Payton described how he and his friends laughed about the brutal attack afterward. Payton was later arrested for violating an order of protection to stay away from the victim.



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