



# The Greenlawn Bugle

The Newsletter of American Legion Greenlawn Post 1244

March 2021

Founded March 15, 1943

Volume 15 Issue 1

## Boys State and Girls State 2021



**L-R: Brother Ryan, Patrick, Parents Barbara and Brian Finn.**

Over the past 10 plus years, we have given well over 100 students the opportunity to participate in the Boy's & Girl's State program. They all return and tell us how much they enjoyed the time spent meeting and working with other students from all over the state, learning how government is meant to operate, and how valuable the experience was to them.

We have just received a note from the proud parents of one of these students about what Boy's State meant to him. Brian Finn writes of his son, Patrick, that "it was life changing for him." Patrick went to Boy's State in the summer of 2015 (We also sent his older brother, Ryan, in 2011).

His father tells us that Patrick has since graduated with

honors from The Ohio State University Army ROTC program, and is now a commissioned officer in the United States Army. The Army granted him an educational delay to attend law school, and he is currently attending The Moritz College of Law at Ohio State University.

Upon completion he will begin his active duty as a JAG Corps officer.

Patrick attended a summer program at Oxford University in England, and interned at the Department of Justice, Southern District of New York. This summer he will be doing an internship with the Department of Justice, Eastern District in Islip before returning to his second year at Moritz this fall.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Boys State and Girls State 2021

*(Continued from page 1)*

His dad wrote “The reason I am writing you is to thank you again for your belief in my son and taking the time to help me help him be a successful young man and a true leader”.

This year’s selection process has been a very challenging and time-consuming adventure for Ed O’Shea, Hal Dieterle, and me; especially coordinating the interviews. In some districts, the protocols did not allow for us to venture on school property, so we went from home to home interviewing some of the students in their backyards.

Other districts allowed us to meet individually with the students in a gym or other wide open meeting area so we could maintain safe distancing, but we could only schedule a few per session after the last class of the day instead of

meeting them all in the same day. In the end, it all came together and we have 23 students from five different high schools (Walt Whitman, Commack, Harborfields, Huntington, and Smithtown West) that will be turning to a virtual Boy’s or Girl’s State late in June.

Hearing from the students or families like the Finn’s is what it is all about, and why we eagerly put so much effort into the program! Our small input to help the future leaders of our country.

**Charlie Armstrong**  
Boys and Girls State Co-Chairman



## Spotlight on The Community



### Walt Whitman Birthplace

#### State Historic Site and Interpretive Center

Located in West Hills, NY, this restored farmhouse is the birthplace in 1819 of America’s greatest poet, Walt Whitman. The house, built by Whitman’s father, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and features period furnishings.

Walt Whitman, whose verse collection “Leaves of Grass,” first published in 1855, is a landmark in the history of American literature.

Most people think of Walt Whitman as a poet and author of “Leaves of Grass” and the poem “O Captain! My Captain!” But Whitman was more — he also served soldiers in the U.S. Civil War and was a delegate of the United States Christian Commission, the organization that would become the Armed Services YMCA

The Interpretive Center includes portraits, original letters, manuscripts, artifacts, Whitman’s voice on tape, and schoolmaster’s desk. Guided tours, audio-visual show, library, museum shop/bookstore, and picnic area are available, as are maps for auto/hiking tours of beautiful, historic West Hills that inspired the poet.

Post 1244 Legionnaire and poet Mary Flatley reminds us that the Walt Whitman Birthplace offers a discount to veterans (\$7.00) for admission. Until the summer, the



hours are Wednesday thru Friday 1-4PM. Saturday and Sunday 11-4PM. Group rates are available for group tours. Please call ahead to schedule a group tour.

**Contact Kelly Ronayne at 631-427-5240 ext 113.** The Birthplace is closed Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

**Walt Whitman Birthplace**  
246 Old Walt Whitman Road  
West Hills, NY 11746  
Phone: (631) 427-5240

## Operation Enduring Care

During our service to our country, we have had challenges that asked us to “push on,” no matter the difficulty. It seems the year 2020 was as challenging. New and ever changing protocols made each day unpredictable. An unseen virus seemed to have turned everything “upside down”.

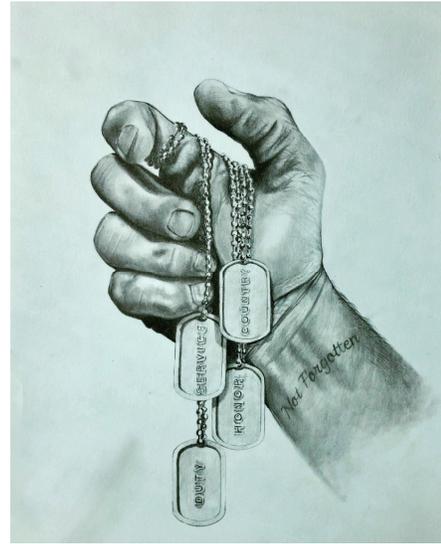
Our post’s efforts to assist, has continued to shine as a beacon of hope to those veterans in need. “Operation Enduring Care” steadily continued to collect and distribute needed hygiene items, underclothing, warm blankets and non-perishable foods. Every two weeks, like clockwork, the call was answered.

There were many unexpected hardships for our veterans in need. Pantries that usually supplied needed food items had shut down suddenly. The “Clothing Closets” were suddenly depleted and shut down. Organizations which have given to collections for veterans in need are having difficulties as well. Creative ideas for fund raising to allow the purchase of goods for donation have been explored. Acquisition of storage has become a requirement. Appointments are often needed before delivering donations. Items also have to be sorted for appropriate dispensing. Items that have been obtained in bulk also require space for storage. Additional requirements due to short expiration dates of consumable items, made it additionally hard to store.

In spite of the above challenges and daily changes in organizational protocols, Greenlawn Post 1244, strived to meet as many requests as possible. The collection of items by “Operation Enduring Care, is ongoing. Regardless of the challenges and turmoil, our mission to assist our veterans in need does no waiver. Each opportunity is met. Each hurdle has been overcome.

During 2021, the lessons from the previous year have encouraged us to become as creative as possible-with purpose. Fund raising now will be with the addition of “Tee Shirts” with the picture of the “Operation Enduring Care” symbolic hand with “dog tags” on the front. The words “Duty, Honor, Country, Not Forgotten,” appear boldly on the back. Each shirt will allow the purchase of enough food items for two meals or hygiene items for two veterans. The cost will be \$20.00 per shirt. The shirts, will spread the word of our collection as well. They will be made available at appropriate times for fund raising.

Canvas shopping bags are also available which match the shirts. These will be prepared as “Care Packages” or individual kits. Each will contain a blanket, can of shaving cream, toothbrush, disposable razors, body wash (bar soaps



### We Will Never Forget

Monetary donations in any amount are especially welcome.

**Checks are payable to:**

**American Legion Post 1244**

***Memo line: Operation Enduring Care***

**PO Box 238**

**Greenlawn, NY 11740**

as

available), shampoo, hairbrush, comb and related hygiene items. Also a package of new underwear, tee shirts, socks, “flip flops” and snacks when available are included. The bags have been warmly received. The bags should instill pride and encourage the recipient to remember the kinship we all share.

Traditional requests for fund raising are also encouraged, but we must be mindful of current protocols for contact. The American Legion Post #1244, website has a more complete list of items needed. Under current restrictions, expiration dates must be considered prior to accepting the items for donation. The website address is:

**[www.post1244.org/operationenduringcare](http://www.post1244.org/operationenduringcare).**

I am very proud to serve with such dedicated members. Together we can strive to reach higher and farther.

***Al Statton***  
**Chairman**  
**Operation Enduring Care**

## You Earned It!



It's tax time already and help is on the way! If your income was \$57,000 or less in 2020, you're eligible to have an IRS-certified volunteer prepare your income tax returns at no cost.

They can also assist with E-Filing. As some of you may be aware, due to COVID-19, many of the sites that have aided in the past have been closed due to COVID-19.

Below I have listed a VITA service that is open, however, limited to virtual assistance only. You must have an email address and a pc to use their service. Hopefully, next year the sites will be open again for in-person help!

HWCLI Virtual VITA  
110 Walt Whitman Road  
Suite 101  
Huntington Station, NY 11746  
**516-738-0447**  
*Volunteer Prepared Taxes*

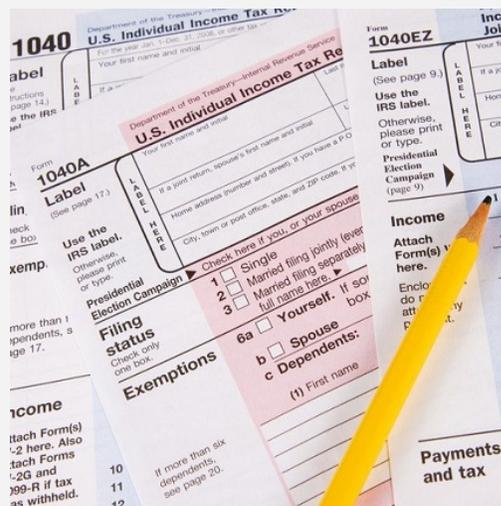
### Service Details:

Monday through Wednesday – 9 am to 5 pm

Thursday & Friday – 11 am to 7 pm

Saturday – 10 am to 6 pm.

**Please note that you must call for an appointment.**



**Don't qualify for VITA tax preparation?** You may be eligible for the Facilitated Self Assistance Program (FSA). If your income in 2020 was \$72,000 or less, you qualify to receive free virtual tax assistance from the department. They can help you electronically prepare and file your 2020 federal and state income tax returns at no cost.

During a pre-scheduled virtual webinar session using WebEx or Zoom, their department representatives will guide you through free tax preparation software, step-by-step, as you complete and file your own tax return. Their online tax software is a safe and secure way to file. **It's quick and easy!**

### What you need to file:

- a lap-top, desktop or tablet, **plus** a smart phone or webcam to verify identity
- basic computer skills
- an active e-mail account
- all your tax documents
- a copy of your 2019 tax return (if you filed)

Note: If you used the FSA program in the past, the software this year has changed. You can still file with them this year, but you will need to create a new account with the new software. Remember to have a copy of last year's return available so you have all the information you need to easily e-file!

To register, sign up on their website: <https://www.tax.ny.gov/fsa/calendars/default.htm>

Sincerely,

**Michelle Martin**  
**Greenlawn Post 1244 Service Officer**  
(Cell) 646-937-2940  
(Email) [mmartin@sus.org](mailto:mmartin@sus.org)  
[www.sus.org](http://www.sus.org)

***\*Reminder – Veterans are eligible for Property Tax Exemptions!***

## Water Bottle Contest Fundraiser - How Much Does It Weigh?

We begin another New Year with the hope that it will be a better one for you and your loved ones.

The COVID-19 pandemic not only interrupted most of our activities last year, but it also put the brakes on much of the fundraising we need to continue our mission.

Last fall, we were offered an unusual gift from Auxiliary member Terry Fay. It was a five-gallon water cooler bottle almost filled with the change her late husband, Walter, deposited in it over many years. Her hope was that we could use it to raise some money for our post.

Well, that bottle has been occupying a place in the corner of Bob Santo's garage since then, and now it is time to dust it off, have a little fun and at the same time see if we can raise some needed funds to re-fill our depleted coffers.

We are conducting a contest to see who can guess the weight of the bottle and its contents. The bottle seems to contain mostly pennies as far as we can see, but there are some other types of coins visible as well. It appears to be a standard five-gallon glass bottle.

The winner of the contest will be the one who most closely guesses the weight without going over the actual weight. The prize will be a 50/50 with the winner receiving half of the net proceeds of the contest. In case of a tie, the proceeds will be divided between both contestants. Guesses are \$5.00 each or three guesses for \$10.00. The bottle and its contents will remain the property of the Post.

We will determine the winner from all entries received by midnight, June 8.

We will weigh the bottle and then announce the winner at our June 9 meeting. If we cannot meet on that date, we will weigh it and announce the winner by ZOOM on that date.

For as little as \$5.00 you can help our post continue our good work for our veterans and their families, our children and youth as well as the community in which we thrive.



The Mystery Water Bottle

Sincerely,

*Donna Boyle*  
Post Commander

If you did not receive an entry form in the mail, you may download one at [WWW.Post1244.org/Waterbottle](http://WWW.Post1244.org/Waterbottle).

Email [bobsanto2@verizon.net](mailto:bobsanto2@verizon.net)

Or Call Bob Santo at 516-458-7881

**Thank You For Your Support!**

## "POST CARTOON AUTHOR WANTED"



So you think you are funny? What is funny? Comedy is not a science, it's art. Therefore there are no rules and it can be very subjective. What one person finds funny another might cringe at. There is no simple answer to why something is funny..

Something is funny because it captures a moment, it contains an element of simple truth, it is something that we have always known yet are hearing out loud for the first time. So try. Maybe you will have a whole new career. ***Now, that would be funny!***

**Rules:** There are a few...You must be a Post 1244 member...It must be an original work or adopted from your grandchild. You must use the cartoons below. Submit as many different entries as you wish. Your words must fit in the box. You can only win one spot out of the top 3..You cannot be a professional cartoonist or comedian. There is no entry fee. Email your entry or call me, not too early, in 38 days. There are about 3 prizes; we are not sure what. Spelling counts. ***The decision of the judge (me) is final!***

Contact 'me' at: [schwartzallen62@gmail.com](mailto:schwartzallen62@gmail.com) / 631-807-1303



## I Am a Veteran

I shivered that cold winter in Valley Forge  
And rejoiced at the glorious surrender at Yorktown.  
I wept as the flames engulfed Washington  
And said "Never again."  
I wore blue and I bled red.  
I wore gray and I bled red.  
The blood I spilled was to reunite a nation  
Of the people, by the people and for the people.  
I am a veteran.

I was at Little Big Horn and I prayed;  
I was at Wounded Knee and I prayed.  
I prayed that one-day the old Americans  
And the new Americans would be one people.  
I was there to charge up the hill at San Juan;  
Knowing that my country was emerging beyond its borders.  
I was prepared to make the world safe for democracy.  
Young and idealistic, I came to France  
To turn back the hordes in this war to end all wars.  
I am a veteran.

It was with disbelief that I became  
A part of the day that will live in infamy.  
Once more I said goodbye to those I loved to protect my country.  
Across the vast desert I met the enemy.  
I met him on island after island.  
I kept my promise to return.  
I met him on the beaches of Normandy.  
I repelled him from the gates of Bastogne.  
I freed thousands from the shadow of death.  
I am a veteran.

A small nation cried out for help  
And I came because others had been there for me.  
A nation was saved.  
Ask not what your country can do for you.  
Ask what you can do for your country.  
Inspired by these words, I responded with courage and bravery  
In a war that was hot and a war that was cold.  
I am a veteran.

From Ground Zero to the Pentagon to the fields of Pennsylvania,  
I saw the carnage and heard the cries. At that moment,  
I pledged my life, my property and my sacred honor  
Until there will be peace and freedom on earth  
For everyone, everywhere.  
I am a veteran.

**Rabbi Paul Swerdlow  
Lead Chaplain,  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
Northport, NY**

## Modest Hero of “Forgotten War” Recalls Historic Rescue Mission

Burley Smith remembers Christmas Day 1950 at the height of the Korean war.

The retired Miami realtor, now 92, was a 21-year-old sailor aboard the United States Merchant Marine vessel Meredith Victory.

He and a few other shipmates had recently graduated from the Merchant Marine Academy Kings Point, New York.

The ship was in Korean waters to carry military equipment to U.S. troops. He vividly recalls the ship.

“The ship was the Meredith Victory ship, hundreds were built during World War II, the top speed was 17 knots, about 20 miles an hour. It had 15 cargo holds and carried a crew of 47 people and could only carry 12 passengers,” said Smith.

But the ship’s assignment changed as thousands of desperate North Koreans fled from the Chinese army. In the bitter cold, Smith and his fellow crew members loaded 14,000 refugees on board for a three-day rescue mission.

“We happened to be the ship that took the most because our skipper Captain Leonard LaRue said ‘pack them aboard as tightly as you can’,” said Smith. “We had 14,000 people stuffed on a small ship. No toilets, no food, no water. They were locked down in the hold afraid mostly of disease.”

The refugees made it safely to South Korea. The Meredith Victory became known as the “ship of miracles” completing the largest humanitarian rescue mission by a single ship in history. “The miracle part of it was the Koreans behaved so well - there was no riot,” said Smith. “None of them spoke English and none of us spoke Korean, my respect for them is immense,” he added.

The rescue is part of South Korean history.



There’s a memorial in the city of Geoje, which Smith has visited. He’s also been presented with medals and commendations from the South Korean government.

“The Koreans celebrate it every year, it’s a big thing. Here, Korea is the ‘forgotten war’ as it’s known,” he said.

The rescue mission is also revered by South Koreans because among the refugees were the parents of Moon Jae-in, the current President of South Korea.

Smith received a letter from President Moon thanking him for his actions 70 years ago, but he has always remained humble about his role on the “ship of miracles.”

“We never felt special, or like heroes. We all came back and we all went to sea again on other ships. The heroic part of it was being part of a successful operation,” he said.

An operation that would change the course of history.

CBS Miami 2/25/2021



### Final Salute



Joseph Ammenwerth  
January 5, 2021

United States Army

Korea

**Their sense of duty continues to preserve our past, safeguard  
our present and sustain our future.**

## High School Oratorical Contest

Two Suffolk County students competed for the Zone 2 Oratorical Contest honors on Saturday, February 6 at Babylon Post 94. They were: Riley Meckley of Ward Melville High School, East Setauket, NY and Catherine Brehmer of St. Pius V School, Melville, NY.

Riley was the winner and will represent Zone 2 at the Department of New York competition on March 6, 2021. Riley was sponsored by Wilson Ritch Post 432 of Pt. Jefferson.

Catherine was sponsored by Greenlawn Post 1244.

Contestants for the Department Competitions are chosen through County, District and Zone competitions in the month of January each year. American Legion Greenlawn Post 1244 has been fortunate to be able to sponsor three contestants each year from St. Pius V School in Melville, NY for at least the past 9 years. We have had a number of County, District and at least one Department of New York champion.



**Photo L-R Harry Ransom, Dept. Vice Cmdr. Districts 2-10; Robert Oaks, contest judge; contestants Riley Meckley and Catherine Brehmer; contest judges Fran Beringer and Cpt. John Cochran Jr. ; John Digilio, Jr. Zone 2 Contest Chairman.**

## Just For Laughs



Two men got a pilot to fly them into the far north for hunting. They were quite successful in their venture and bagged six big elk. The pilot came back, as arranged, to pick them up.

They started loading their gear into the plane, including the six elk. But the pilot objected and he said: "The plane can only take four of your elk; you will have to leave two behind."

The pair argued with him saying the year before they had shot six and the pilot had allowed them to put all aboard. The plane was the same model and capacity.

Reluctantly, the pilot finally permitted them to put all six aboard. But when they attempted to take off and leave the valley, the little plane could not make it and they crashed into the wilderness. Climbing out of the wreckage, one hunter said to the other: "Do you know where we are?" "I think so," replied the other hunter. "I think this is about the same place where we crashed last year!"



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## American Legion Riders



Happy month of March to all. The Riders are trying to keep our tires above the snow. I think we all have had about enough of this white stuff. With our bikes blocked in by mounds of snow, we are forced to drive those things called cars.

Let's hope the warmer weather is not too far away.



Things for all of us are still far from normal. With funeral homes and cemeteries having many restrictions, all we are able to do is be respectful and listen to the

family's wishes. The biker community supports each other, and we try to help whenever we are able.

With that being said, we look forward to getting back to business as usual, so that we can continue our missions of supporting our heroes and their families. We are anticipating a busy spring and summer and hope to be actively participating in parades, fundraisers and veteran events as soon as possible.

As always, we welcome new riders and volunteers.

Please contact Bruce Blanco at 631-745-9330 or any of our riders for information regarding joining the riders or if you know of a veteran in need of assistance.

We wish all a healthy and safe beginning of spring.

*Bruce Blanco*

Director, Legion Riders Chapter 1244

631-745-9330

[ride4mike@gmail.com](mailto:ride4mike@gmail.com)

## Sons of The American Legion



Hello Gentlemen.

It's been a long, cold winter. I hope everyone is doing well. As I write this, it is 66 degrees out and I am seeing people out and about (exciting).

I am hoping soon we will have some of these restrictions lifted so we all can get together for a meeting and discuss our year and the future of the Sons of The American Legion. I would love to hear from each and everyone of you. If you can find the time, please touch base with me to say hello and maybe have a few ideas for the upcoming summer events.

Please contact me at 516-241-1399. Thank you,

*Angus Kennedy*

Commander, Sons of The American  
Legion

[Angus.Kennedy@bgis.com](mailto:Angus.Kennedy@bgis.com)  
516-241-1399

## American Legion Post Decals

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They are available for \$6 each. E mail us at [Post1244@verizon.net](mailto:Post1244@verizon.net) to order yours.





### A Membership Challenge For Our Future

You may have noticed the absence of our “Welcome To Our Newest Members” in the space below this column.

Not surprisingly, we have not gained one new member since last November, and our membership overall has declined over the past two years. The

COVID-19 pandemic made the situation worse, as opportunities to interact and recruit veterans to our post were almost non-existent for the past 12 months.

But surely, the pandemic was not the only factor. As a group we are becoming older. Just as many of us were drawn to the American Legion in our 50's or 60's, so too, will the next generation of veterans.

Just because this has been the pattern for so many years doesn't mean it has to continue.

There are reasons why younger veterans are not drawn

to membership in our post. Some reasons have to do with their stage of life. Family, school and career issues are important. We have no control over those things.

What we can control is who we are and how we are perceived.

We already have a well deserved reputation for our service to our fellow veterans and our community. Letting others know about what we do and how we contribute is a great step in attracting today's veterans of our all-volunteer military.

I would be interested in hearing from any of you who have suggestions as to how we can extend our reach to the next generation of future legionnaires.

*Carlo Giordano*

**1st Vice Commander  
Membership Chairman**

**Cgiordano9@optonline.net**



## The Commander's Corner



Happy Spring,

I hope everyone reading this is enjoying this year's spring. As a nation we need a break. Spring provides it. This is my favorite time of year. The weather is better, nature is greening up, flowers are starting to appear, and for some reason spring

provides me with a sense of hope. In my opinion this year has been the worst in my 60 years so. Good riddance!

Did you send in your "Guess the Weight" entries yet? I hope you are able to support us in this fund raising event. If you can't support us maybe we can provide some support to you. If you need support in anything please reach out to us, maybe we can help. (Just in case you need contact info my email is [39dpip@gmail.com](mailto:39dpip@gmail.com) and my phone number is 631-942-2156).

Last year you were not provided with the opportunity to vote on your post leadership. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, The American Legion Department of New York issued a directive that existing leadership terms were to be extended for one year. That directive has been suspended. This year, elections will be held.

Nominations are due in April. If you know a member or are a member who wants to be or who would be good in one of our post positions Please submit your nomination by contacting me

I hope we are able to resume our monthly meetings soon. If not, I plan to hold outdoor meetings in June, July and August.

***Donna Boyle***  
Post Commander  
631-942-2156  
[39dpip@gmail.com](mailto:39dpip@gmail.com)



## The Greenlawn Bugle

The American Legion Media Alliance 2020 First Place Award  
For Posts Under 249 Members

National American Legion Press Association First Place Award 2018;  
Second Place Award 2019

New York American Legion Press Association's Best Paper Award  
2009-2012-2013-2014-2015-2016-2017-2018-2019

**New Sponsor Beginning This Month: Gerken Plumbing  
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*The Greenlawn Bugle: Editor, Publisher,*



*Writer, Photographer and Reporter Bob Santo*



*Contributing Writers: Charlie Armstrong, Bruce Blanco, Donna Boyle,*

*Carlo Giordano, Angus Kennedy, Michelle Martin, Allen Schwartz, Al Statton*

*Photos by: Charlie Armstrong, Bob Santo, and many unknowns*

*Copy Editor, Envelope Labeling, Stuffing, Circulation and Morale Officer: Madelaine Santo*



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Councilman  
Town of Huntington



*Thank you for your Service*  
Huntington Town Hall  
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*Thank you to our  
Veterans  
and their families for  
serving our country.*

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Town of Huntington



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*Proud member of  
American Legion Auxiliary  
Greenlawn Unit 1244*



**Kevin S. Orelli**  
Superintendent of Highways  
Town of Huntington



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Huntington, NY 11743  
(631) 499-0444

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Huntington, NY 11743  
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and sacrifice for our Country.**



**Susan A. Berland, Esq.**  
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR  
16th Legislative District

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Commack, NY 11725

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3075 VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY, SUITE 200  
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631-582-3700

SUFFOLK:  
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2 CORACI BLVD, SUITE 6  
SHIRLEY, NY 11967  
631-582-3700

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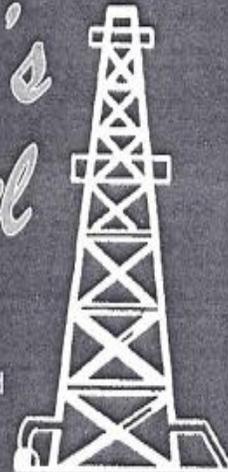
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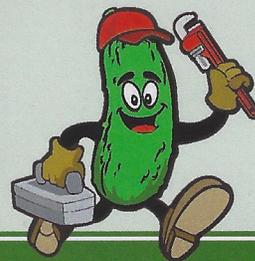
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