

MUSINGS

'Barn' once had it all: Sports, stars and glory

When reading "This Date in History" in Newsday, I remember many of those events. Sometimes I am stunned to see something that seems as if it happened yesterday but actually occurred 30, 40 or even 50 years ago.

Here's one that happened 61 years ago, on April 7, 1965. Long Island won its first professional hockey championship at the original "Barn," the Long Island Arena in Commack. The Long Island Ducks of the Eastern Hockey League defeated the Nashville Dixie Flyers, 3-1, to win the Walker Cup before 4,300 fans.

Suffolk County was still growing, and the area was as much a rural community as it was suburbia. Long Island Arena was billed as the Madi-



Peter Frampton recorded "Show Me the Way" for "Frampton Comes Alive!" at Long Island Arena in 1975.

son Square Garden of the East by Tom Lockhart, president of the American Hockey Association, who had the idea of building it on those 22 acres.

The arena was the site of political rallies, including 1960

■ **MUSINGS:** The mission of Newsday's editorial page is to provide reasoned, informed opinions on Long Island issues. On Mondays, readers have a forum, Musings, to present their prose on politics and policy in a thoughtful and thought-provoking way. Email letters@newsday.com as text; subject: Musings.

presidential candidates John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. And more: wrestling, boxing, roller derby, the circus. The New Jersey Americans of the American Basketball Association moved there in 1968 and changed their name to the New York Nets. Now, they're the Brooklyn Nets. (The arena closed in 1996; these days you'll find a strip of stores anchored by Target on the south side of Veterans Highway.)

Singer Peter Frampton recorded the live version of his hit song "Show Me the Way" for his iconic "Frampton Comes Alive!" album at the arena in 1975. Eight years earlier, The Who and the Beach Boys performed in that space. It wasn't just rock concerts, though. You could see Tony Bennett, Connie Francis, Louis Armstrong and

even the Boston Pops.

The best-known tenant in these parts, however, was the Long Island Ducks, owned by Al Baron. During the championship season, he had to spar with the Town of Smithtown just to keep the doors open after the town found safety violations. Baron's swashbuckling Ducks were a rough group led by legendary tough guy John Brophy. The crowds could also be a bit tough. Baron often said, "It's the only place where the players stop to watch the fights in the stands."

Baron was much more than just an owner. He broadcast the championship game over radio station WPAC when the Ducks won Long Island's first championship on April 7, 1965, on this date in history.

— JOSEPH ROSSI, WEST BABYLON

Neighborhood in need of help

In my neighborhood, the arrival of warmer weather brings more than just longer days. It also brings an increase in activity that raises concerns about safety and quality of life.

Over time, I have observed patterns that highlight ongoing issues here in the Coram and Middle Island areas: public drug use, prostitution, discarded needles and people living in encampments in nearby wooded areas. These are not isolated incidents. They occur at different times of day, even when families and children are nearby. The presence of needle waste, in particular, poses a serious public health risk — not only to residents, but anyone simply walking through the area.

I work full time for New York State and also in two homeless shelters, so I am not unfamiliar with complex social challenges. I understand the realities of active substance use, homelessness and the gaps in support systems. At the same time, the conditions in my immediate community underscore how these issues can directly affect everyday life when they are left unaddressed.

I have, on multiple occasions, contacted emergency services in response to suspected overdoses and sexual solicitation. I have also taken it upon myself to clean up discarded items — needles, trash and other debris — simply to make the area safer. While these are small actions, this is an ongoing problem.

I suggest a more consistent presence aimed at maintaining public safety, paired with proactive outreach to connect individuals in need with shelter, treatment and long-term support. Efforts to keep shared spaces clean and reduce hazardous waste would also go a long way to restoring a sense of security for all.

This is not about placing blame. It is about recognizing that community safety matters. I believe a thoughtful, coordinated approach can help ensure that neighborhoods remain livable while also supporting those who are struggling.

— ALVIN JULIUS GILMORE, MIDDLE ISLAND

Abuse victims have resources

Society must recognize the challenges that victims of domestic violence face and build awareness and create direct connections to lifesaving resources. Having worked with these victims as a licensed creative arts therapist, I am aware of the alarming number of domestic victims who cannot access such resources.

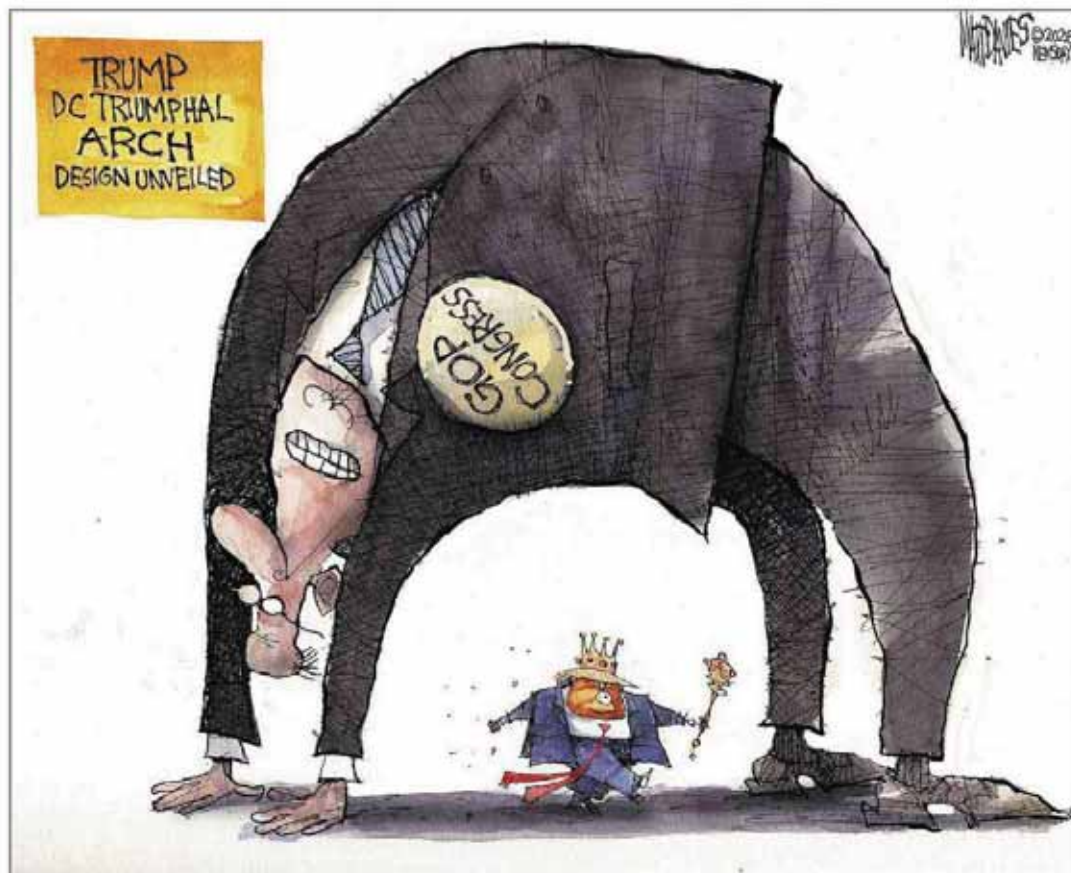
It is not always easy to "just leave," as many people believe. It often can be dangerous for those seeking refuge. Research shows many victims remain in abusive relationships due to financial and housing instability and limited access or lack of awareness of essential resources.

The federal Violence Against Women Act provides funding for programs that address housing instability, financial insecurity and safety. However, these programs are useless if victims do not know they exist.

Besides focusing on severe domestic abuse, the media should also promote awareness of available resources, increasing the number of survivors.

— JENNIFER DELLA VALLE, CENTER MORICHES

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■ **EDITORIAL CARTOONIST MATT DAVIES'** opinions are his own. You can see more of his work at newsday.com/matt