

# FLORAL PARK DISPATCH

VOL. 61, No. 47

WWW.ANTONNEWS.COM

JANUARY 8 - 14, 2014

\$1.00

## Hempstead Officials Sworn In



Alyssa Pallotta sings at the town's induction ceremony.

By DANIEL OFFNER

DOFFNER@ANTONNEWS.COM

After a rigorous election season, America's largest township honored its 10-year veteran town supervisor, three recently re-elected town councilmen and a newly minted town clerk with an induction ceremony on Jan. 2. Inside the pavilion at Hempstead Town Hall, re-elected Town Supervisor Kate Murray, a Levittown resident, was joined by her nieces and nephews as she took her oath for another term.

"Thank you to the men and women who voted for us this past election year," Murray said. "We promise to continue to work to justify the

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## Firefighters: Insurance Question

By WENDY KARPEL KREITZMAN

WKREITZMAN@ANTONNEWS.COM

The nation's new Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare") has a provision that could put Floral Park and other local fire departments—as well as local governments—at considerable financial risk. Fire-fighting departments with 50 or more members could be forced to provide health insurance for their volunteer firefighters or else pay substantial fines.

Village of Floral Park Mayor Thomas Tweedy told the *Floral Park Dispatch* "Because the law is so unclear, it may be imprudent to comment at this time, but we do support all efforts to clarify the Affordable Care Act and to protect our local volunteer fire departments."

The health care law has specific insurance requirements for employers with 50 or more employees. While the U.S. Department of Labor terms these firefighters "volunteers," the Internal Revenue Service classifies volunteer firefighters as employees.

Members of Congress are aware of this issue, though so far, no changes have been made at the federal level.

"Volunteer firefighters provide an invaluable service to our communities and save lives. We need to make sure policies aren't put in place that would be detrimental to fire departments on Long Island and across the nation," said Rep. Steve Israel (D.

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## College Learning Has No Age Limit

By COLLEEN MAIDHOF

CMAIDHOF@ANTONNEWS.COM

Floral Park resident Zona Schreiber is an active member of Hofstra University's Personal Enrichment in Retirement Program (PEIR). The retired Spanish teacher is, once again, enrolled in college, but now as a senior. As a member, she lectures others in the program, and she attends the lectures those members present.

"The students are the teachers at PEIR," Schreiber said. The lectures given by retired seniors of all professions include a myriad of topics, covering everything from astrophysics to poetry. Members can attend any lecture, and they can teach what they

please on their own time.

Schreiber often lectures her peers about topics that interest her, in effort to get others also interested. The Aztec civilization is one subject that she has lectured about. Her travels to Mexico and knowledge of Spain sparked her interest in researching and lecturing about the topic.

Knowledge is the reason why Schreiber joined the PEIR Program. She said, "You never stop learning. Everyone here is truly interested in learning, so we come here to do just that."

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Floral Park resident Zona Schreiber presents a lecture about primitive societies led by Dave Paris, also from Floral Park. (Colleen Maidhof)

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confidence you put in myself and my colleagues.”

Supervisor Murray with a speech covering the 2014 budget—heralding that it cuts town taxes for a third consecutive year—the community’s efforts during Hurricane Sandy in 2012, and the town’s dedication to providing affordable homes, clean drinking water and green energy.

“In Hempstead Town, we’ve weathered a national economic meltdown while showing the highest regard for taxpayers,” Murray added. “At the same time, we’ve helped neighbors who are recovering from Hurricane Sandy and we are growing our local economy while improving the quality-of-life experience for neighbors who call America’s largest township home.”

Following a performance from *American Idol* contestant Robbie Rosen, U.S. Congressman Rep. Peter King stepped forward to induct newly elected Town Clerk Nasrin G. Ahmad to her first term in office. Making her transition from private citizen to public official, Ahmad said she intends to maintain cost-effective programming while striving to provide services in a

more user-friendly way.

“I plan on working hard for all residents in the Town of Hempstead,” Ahmad said.

After the induction of the newest elected official, Senior Councilman Anthony Santino was sworn into his seventh term in office by state Supreme Court Justice Hon. Ruth Balkin.

“I stand here old enough to reflect on the past two decades,” Santino said, “while also being young enough to look to the future.”

After thanking his constituents, Santino went on to praise his colleagues for their efforts to sustain a budget that reduces taxes for a third year.

“We have the finest public officials anywhere... they have kept our town an island of fiscal strength amongst a sea of red ink,” Santino added.

Re-elected with 89 percent of the vote, Councilwoman Dorothy Goosby took the oath of office for another term on the Hempstead Town Council.

“We each have one vote and need to get the vote of the people to get it done,” Goosby said. “I am grateful to serve for the 14th year as your councilwoman.”

Following another performance, from the Vision of Victory Singers with the Mount Sinai Baptist Church

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3rd district). “I am reaching out to the IRS to make certain that they take into account the unique situation of volunteer firefighters and ensure that fire departments aren’t saddled with costs they can’t handle.”

William F. Murray, president of the Volunteer Firefighters Association of Southern New York, said he is against the new provision to the Affordable Care Act.

“It would really hurt the volunteer fire departments,” Murray said.

According to Murray, while the change to Obamacare would

negatively impact volunteer departments, he is hopeful that the efforts of federal lawmakers, will get it changed.

Local village mayors have written to the congressman and to senators, urging them to intervene and exempt them from the Affordable Care Act.

Spokesmen from the Vigilant and Manhasset-Lakeville fire departments said that their volunteers are already able to receive health insurance by buying into the New York State plan, with their own personal funds, through the Town of North Hempstead. Additionally, many volunteer firefighters have health insurance through their employers.

Cathedral, Councilman Gary Hudes was the last of the re-elected town council to take his oath of office.

“We are all partners,” Hudes said, just following his induction. “Partners who effect change and growth in the Town of Hempstead.”

Hudes concluded by thanking members of the community for coming out to vote this past election year, and for re-electing him to another four-year term.

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There are many perk of being a senior student. Schreiber laughed and said, “These lectures are wonderful, we don’t have any exams or grades, and we can cut if we want to!”

The PIER program is for retirees ages 55 and older. To schedule a visit, call Bradley Kaye at 516-463-4824. The website is [www.hofstra.edu/academics/ce/lifelonglearning/peir](http://www.hofstra.edu/academics/ce/lifelonglearning/peir).

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