

## EDITORIAL

# Avoid seasonal hazards

When you think about seasonal hazards in the months of January and February, there are a number of terrifying situations that come to mind. However, taking the proper precautions during the brutal cold, snow and ice will help to insure that you make it through winter unscathed.

Since travel conditions are seriously compromised at this time of year, obvious safety measures should be in place before taking your vehicle out on the road. The most important of these is to be mindful of the possible dangers when behind the wheel. Hospitals see more motor vehicle accidents when there's snow and ice on the streets. No surprise there.

Knowing one's limitations when traversing the frozen terrain on foot is just as important. Slips and falls wreak havoc on bones and soft tissue. Wear proper footwear and clothing to protect your skin from the elements if you have to go outside.

However, one of the most devastating perils in winter surprisingly occurs indoors. It's the one that's called the 'silent killer': carbon monoxide poisoning. The incomplete burning of fuels, such as charcoal, wood, oil, gas, kerosene and propane produce carbon monoxide or CO. When this colorless, odorless gas is released into unventilated spaces and inhaled, it could cause illness and eventually, death. That's because CO robs the body of its ability to absorb oxygen. Symptoms of CO poisoning can range from fatigue, headache, dizziness, mental confusion, nausea, vomiting, and eventually, loss of consciousness. There are between 40,000-50,000 emergency room visits in the U.S. every year due to CO poisoning and five to six thousand of them are fatal, making it the leading cause of accidental poisoning death.

Less than eight weeks into 2015, and there already have been some sobering CO incidents in the Town of Islip.

In January, two Bay Shore business buildings had to be evacuated because CO leaked from kerosene space heaters that were used to supplement the heating system. At another location in Bay Shore, the tenants living in a multi-family dwelling were displaced when CO was detected in the building. Some residents said they had kept their stoves lit to heat their apartments. And then earlier this month, two men were found dead in an auto body repair shop in Holbrook. A kerosene heater and a running van were to blame.

Fuel powered space heaters should never be utilized indoors. Period. Home-heating systems, which for various reasons could also emit CO, need to be regularly maintained. And, in addition to smoke detectors, every home should have a CO detector on every floor. That's not just a recommendation, either – it's New York state law (Amanda's Law: Chapter 367 of the Laws of 2009).

Surviving all of the hazards of winter might seem like a challenge, especially during the extreme weather our area has been experiencing this year. But, take comfort in knowing we've already managed to get through more than half of the season, and a glorious spring is only four weeks away from today.

# THE SUFFOLK LIBRARIAN

By PETER WARD

*A wealth of information and services*

## Libraries celebrate Black History Month

**SUFFOLK COUNTY**—Since 1976, U.S. presidents have annually declared February as Black History Month. It is a time to acknowledge the accomplishments of African Americans as well as their important role in American history.

In the lives of many Americans, the public library has been an important aid to achievement. Librarian James C. Welbourne calls libraries tools for economic self-reliance. Unlike other organizations, the public library offers resources in a caring, community-based, and politically neutral venue. Just as important, in our increasingly information-driven world, the library is a guide to information literacy: understanding the value, truthfulness, and viewpoint of the forms of information we encounter in our lives. Moreover, libraries empower learners as individuals. Where public schooling expects a class of students to uniformly master a certain set of information – a very necessary and admirable task in itself – the library, just as necessarily, enables the student to pursue information according to their own inclinations. In the words of Glendora Johnson-Cooper, librarians guide users to become "self-directed, independent learners capable of meeting their own information needs."

This February, head to your library to pick up a book on an episode in African-American history, a biography of a black artist, poet, or scholar, or speak to a librarian about recommended books and book-lists. Libraries across Suffolk County will commemorate Black History Month with lectures, films, book discussions, music, arts, crafts, and displays. A selection is provided below.

### Black History Month Celebration (Brentwood Public Library)

Feb. 20, 6-8 p.m.

New York State Senator Tom Croci will be holding a

celebration of Black History Month honoring community leaders, including Library Assistant Mona-Pierre Louis.

### African-American Read-In

Feb. 21, 5 p.m. (Canio's Books, hosted by the John Jermain Public Library)

The seventh annual African-American Read-In sponsored by the Black Caucus of The National Council of Teachers of English read short excerpts of fiction, poetry or non-fiction and enjoy light refreshments.

### Tribute to Black Jazz Legends (Sachem Public Library)

Feb. 22, 2 p.m.

Saxophonist Curtis Haywood and his band pay tribute to the great black jazz legends.

### The Underground Railroad on Long Island (Patchogue-Medford Library)

Feb. 26 at 7 p.m.

Kathleen Velsor, associate professor at SUNY College at Old Westbury, author of "The Underground Railroad on Long Island: Friends of Freedom," follows the path of runaway slaves to freedom on Long Island.

### Black History Month (North Babylon Public Library)

Feb. 26, 7-8:30 p.m.

Adelphi Professor Marsha Darling, director of the Center for African, Black and Caribbean Studies, will speak about Black History Month.

### Author Reading (Amityville Public Library)

Feb. 28, 2 p.m.

Author Elizabeth Nunez reads from her memoir, "Not For Everyday Use." ■



## Best in chowder

**OAKDALE**—The 16th annual Long Island Chowder Contest took place earlier this month at the Snapper Inn restaurant. A total of six restaurants participated this year and were judged on soups in three categories: Manhattan clam chowder, New England clam chowder and Seafood bisque. All of the participants used local clams from the Great South Bay.

The top three winners in each category this year were: Seafood bisque: first place, Snapper Inn; second place, Vincent's Clam Bar in Carle Place; and third place, Jeff's Surf and Turf in Huntington. Manhattan clam chowder: first place, Jolly Fisherman in Roslyn; second place (tie), Snapper Inn and Irish Coffee Pub in East Islip; and third place, Vincent's Clam Bar. New England clam chowder: first place (tie), Vincent's Clam Bar and Wave Seafood Kitchen in Port Jefferson; second place, Snapper Inn; and third place, Jolly Fisherman.

The Snapper Inn took in the most awards, thanks to chef Maureen Denning, who is pictured here with one of the judges, Carl LoBue of the Nature Conservancy. The event raises money for the not-for-profit organization.

Photo by Monica Musetti Carlin.

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## THE Islip Bulletin

*It is not our aim to tell readers what to think, but to provide them with food for thought and to make interpretive editorial comment on the news.*

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