

Good afternoon. I'd like to thank the League of Women Voters for once again hosting the State of the Town address at our beautiful Clubhouse at Harbor Links, one of the premier public golf courses in the United States.

Let me take this moment to acknowledge my wife, Kim. And introduced our town officials beginning with Town Clerk Leslie Gross; Receiver of Taxes Charlie Berman; Town Council Members Fred Pollack, Tom Dwyer, Angelo Ferrara, Lee Seeman, Kitty Poons, and Viviana Russell. I would also like to acknowledge Deputy Supervisor Chris Senior, Chief of Staff JoAnne Taormina, Finance Director David Gottesman, Deputy Chief of Staff Caisy Goldschmidt, and the rest of my staff April Brown Lake, Jason Elan, Collin Nash, Sid Nathan, John Meehan, Fran Reid, Mohinder Taneja, Helen McCann, Gaitrie Persaud and our newest member Lauren Summa. I would also like to welcome all of the other officials in the room and thank them for being here today.

As I look back on the last seven years, I can see that we have accomplished much and we have made a difference. Upon taking office as town supervisor in January of 2004 I looked to re-imagine town government to the extent that we in government could give residents confidence that government actually works. That meant that we needed to find out where it wasn't working and meet the challenges that existed head on. We did not want to just fix the problem, we wanted to change the system.

We have done this in many ways, many times over and I am proud to speak about town government here in the Town of North Hempstead. The work that we began many years ago is now bearing fruit. The creativity, intensity, and determination that we brought to this town has yielded real results which can be quantified, which can be seen, which can be lived.

I would like to thank and acknowledge my predecessor, May Newburger, who laid the foundation making the hard choice that she did many years ago. In essence, she paved the way for the work that we have done these last seven years and on behalf of the Town of North Hempstead, I thank her for her service to our community.

Today, simply put, I would like to tell you what our town government does and I will do so in a level of detail never before possible.

Town government is the most basic form of government in the State of New York. Of approximately 1500 towns, cities and villages in the State of New York, more than 900 of them are towns. In fact everyone in New York lives in either one of these Towns or one of the State's 62 cities. North Hempstead happens to be the fifth most populated town in the State of New York. Only two cities have larger populations.

North Hempstead's history as a town begins, as I discussed during last year's address, when the residents of the northern part of the Town of Hempstead wanted to send delegates to the provincial congress in 1775, but were rebuffed by the Loyalist Hempstead Town officials. On September 23, 1775, they declared their independence of the Town of Hempstead and in so doing of the British Crown. Many of them ended up under arrest the following year, but with the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, their cause was won and North Hempstead was officially established in 1783.

The Town of North Hempstead has about 225,000 residents, is about 53 square miles with 31 miles of coast line along the bays and harbors off of the Long Island Sound. Within its borders are 31 villages, 12 school districts, over 60 special districts, authorities and municipal associations. Queens County in New York City borders us to the west and the Town of Oyster Bay to the east.

In recent years, our Town has been recognized as one of the top one hundred best places to live in America (only two communities from the state of New York made the list); one of the top 25 healthiest places for seniors to live (we were rated number two in the country behind only Anaheim, California); and one of the 15 wealthiest towns in America as well. When reporting on these designations, Money Magazine specifically referred to a number of our programs and accomplishments.

From a philosophical viewpoint, our town government does what town governments do. We provide the framework for society to work. Our town, like every other town in America, is a manifestation of the social contract where we as citizens give up a degree of our individual liberty so that we can all benefit from being part of the larger community. We pay our taxes and agree to abide by the local laws and codes so that the government can provide roads and sewers, pick up our garbage, build ball fields and community centers, keep our community safe and create an environment where people can pursue happiness, however it is that they define that term.

Discussing the practical application of Enlightened political philosophy doesn't necessarily explain whether or not our residents are getting a bargain in this deal, however. Some will argue that they are not, most will agree that they are. That, of course, is what elections are about.

To better explain my approach to local government, which stresses accessibility, continuity, and accountability, not only as ideals, but as management tools let me take you back to my first experiences in North Hempstead.

When I was hired in 1998 by then Supervisor May Newburger to become the Town's first Public Safety commissioner, I was given the responsibility of overseeing code enforcement, illegal housing, rental registration, parking enforcement, animal control, harbor patrol, town security, and emergency management. I also served as Harbor Master and general advisor to the Supervisor.

Soon thereafter, I met with all of the code inspectors and asked them to each tell me how many tickets they had issued the previous month for code violations. I asked how many cases the division had opened the previous month and how many inspections each inspector had conducted the previous day, week and month. There was a range of answers to these questions, although not the range that you might think. What I heard ranged from "I don't know," to "I don't care," to "I don't have to tell you," to "I have no way of finding out that information."

I next went to our then technology staff, and was told they could not retrieve the records of the inspectors' work product, and had no way to track the information going forward. So I instead went out and purchased for each inspector a little red diary where they would place either a line or an x to count daily how many inspections they each conducted and how many tickets they each would write, data we could then evaluate going forward.

I explained to my staff at the time that this information would not only help me manage better, but would help explain to others the actual amount of work that they were doing. By the end of the year, I was stunned to find out that this handful of inspectors handled approximately 2000 cases. While this was exciting news, I eventually become quite frustrated with the fact that not only did we open 2000 new cases, but we closed 2000 cases a year as well, most of them with no record whatsoever of what had actually happened. Without that level of detail, there was no way to determine if we found a problem, achieved a solution, punished the violator or even had any contact with anyone.

It was this experience that started me down the road to 311 and TownStat and the system we now have in place today.

With this in mind, what is the state of the Town, today in this economy during these times of cynicism and frustration. To begin with, the state of the town is that it, too, like the nation itself is emerging from this dark time. Our challenge locally was to retract, but not dismantle. We did not wait out the storm, but rather busied ourselves during these last few years building the infrastructure of community, of government, of our town. We never lost hope and we always had confidence. Today, the results show that the state of the town is solid, not just in dollars and cents, but in the structure of government that has emerged through trial and error, through challenge and success.

From a fiscal standpoint, we remain cautious, but optimistic. Our bond rating, Aa2, the highest in town history has been maintained, and we continue to be recognized by the bond rating agencies for our “conservative fiscal management practices.” And, yet even in these hard times we moved forward on infrastructure projects such as our new community center in New Cassel and our pool rehabilitation projects at Tully and Manorhaven Parks. We have taken advantage of low interest rates, lower construction costs, and we reap the benefits of putting people back to work. We have done more with less in terms of personnel, programming dollars, and even operational dollars, but we always continued to do. We continued to obtain grants in order to move projects forward and we, like everybody else, have been frustrated when some of those dollars didn't come through as planned. The ship, however, remains steady and our course brings us forward. The Town of North Hempstead has weathered the storm.

So where are we today with all of the projects that we have been working on over the years. We begin, of course, with 311.

In 2010 the 311 Call Center received a record 167,472 calls. This is worth repeating. In 2010, the Town of North Hempstead 311 call center received over 167,000 calls. Every one of them logged in, responded to and fully documented in perpetuity. Our busiest day to date occurred following the post Christmas blizzard where we received 1,210 calls at our 311 call center. To ensure staff was in place for that post-storm volume, the call center director Vinny Malizia picked up staff from their homes in a North Hempstead hybrid SUV to make sure the call center was ready for action. It is that kind of dedication that makes the 311 Call Center the success that it is, and exemplifies the kind of employee can-do spirit found all across our Town government.

In fact, 2010 saw a major landmark, when 311 received its half-millionth call. **Corina Mintz**, from Port Washington, was that 500,000th caller who wanted to know more about the opening of our new Aquatic Activities Center. Corina is here today, let's give her a nice welcome.

Our 311 operation is within our the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunication (DOITT) formally under commissioner Tom Hardy and now lead by Frank Prisciandaro. The DOITT team keeps the entire Town connected, from e-mail to cell phones to digital and internet landlines. Their work has saved the Town thousands of dollars, and has helped every Department work smarter and more efficiently.

The very first Department to go live with 311 back in 2005 was the town's Highway Department. In 2010, the Highway Department responded to 10,987 service requests in 2010. Under the able leadership of Superintendent Thomas Tiernan the department filled 893 potholes, resurfaced 14 lane miles of road, planted 505 trees, trimmed 1334 trees, removed 692 dead or dying trees, issued 754 road opening permits, removed 10 abandoned vehicles, and installed 1688 signs – including work for schools, special districts and villages through our Office of Intermunicipal Coordination.

These numbers do not include the incredible job that Highway crews have done clearing snow so far this winter or the support the Department offers to villages and districts in need during storms and other moments of crisis – including helping pull a man out of a sump and saving one Village Hall from being overrun by a mud slide during a serious rain storm. Highway crews sweep our streets where they remove over 200 tons of dirt each year from our roads, keep our storm drains clear and our bays and waterways free from unhealthy sediment and pollution. The Department has helped pump out streets full of water during flooding episodes and builds and improves town parking lots in its spare time.

Our Parks department received more than 12,000 calls through 311 in 2010. This department manages 51 facilities on more than 800 acres. The Parks Department hosts numerous year-round and seasonal programs concerts, and seven unique/distinct festivals including our Memorial Day Fireworks Commemoration at North Hempstead Beach Park, Family Beach Festival, Asian Festival and the soon to be announced KidsStock also at North Hempstead Beach Park; Our EcoFestival, Spooky Week and Winter Wonderland all at Clark Botanic Gardens; and North Hempstead Day at Mary Jane Davies Park. These festivals are all done in conjunction with our Community Services Department which I will get to in a moment.

Our Parks Department maintains our fine network of parks, our town dock in Port Washington, community center facilities in New Hyde Park, Roslyn and Port Washington, and Harbor Links Golf Course and clubhouse where we are today . In the summer months they run pools at Manorhaven Beach Park, Whitney Pond Park, Bunkey Reid Park, as well as the Harbor Hills and New Hyde Park Park District pools. For year-round swimming, Parks also oversees our newly upgraded indoor Aquatic Center at Tully Park. Parks coordinates all of our youth summer camp programs plus soccer, baseball and lacrosse fields, and a turf football field at Tully Park stadium. Last year, close to 6000 families registered for Parks Department program offerings, joined by more than 19,000 individual registrants. Tens of

thousands attended our festivals, and thousands more participated in sports programs or visited our beaches and gardens.

In 2010 the Department's long-time Commissioner, Gerald Olsen, retired after 40 years of service. We thank him for his years of dedication and service and we welcome new Parks Commissioner Donald Zauner who was formerly our general manager at Harbor Links.

Harbor Links Golf course, by the way, hosted 40,000 rounds of golf at our 18-hole championship golf course in 2010 and 27,000 rounds of golf at our nine hole executive golf course. The clubhouse hosted dozens of weddings, bar mitzvahs, christenings, gala dinners and an occasional state of the town address. The Harbor Links complex also features a miniature golf course and athletic fields and sits next to the new Sandminers Monument dedicated only a few months ago with special thanks going to Leo Ciminifor coordinating the effort and Ken Langone for commissioning and financing the extraordinary sculpture dedicated to the Sandminers, who for generations dug the sand that went into the concrete that built the foundation of the great City of New York, our neighbor to the West.

Next year, our Parks Department will have a new facility on line when we open our newest community center in New Cassel, a 60,000 square foot platinum LEED-certified green structure featuring two NBA sized basketball courts, dance and television studios, a lounge for seniors, internet cafe, multipurpose room and much, much more.

The Public Safety Department, under new Commissioner Andy DeMartin, is another wide-ranging department within our government, encompassing Code Enforcement, Parking Enforcement, Animal Control, Harbor Patrol, and Emergency Management. Our Code Enforcement division received over 6000 service requests, an average of 571 Service Requests a month in 2010 – addressing violations ranging from unpermitted dumpsters to unsightly and unmaintained property to sidewalks not cleared after a snowstorm. That, by the way, would have required a lot of little red diaries back in the day. While many of those calls may be duplicative to the extent that an individual constituent may call many times for updates or several people might call on the same issue, each call gets logged in and responded to every time. In 2010 our code inspectors conducted 4818 code inspections, issued 1506 written Notices of Violation and issued 520 summonses, up from only 176 the year before. In 2010 our Parking Enforcement Division issued 15,545 Parking Tickets, also an increase over 2009.

In 2010, our Animal Shelter adopted out 197 dogs and reunited 104 dogs with their owners. The success of our animal shelter is due largely to our assistant director who runs the show over there, Susan Hassett, our professional and caring staff, and the extraordinary work of the Shelter Connection, a group that volunteers at the shelter, training our dogs before they are adopted out [or training the trainers who train the dogs?]. The Shelter Connection helps make our dogs more likely to get adopted and to stay adopted once someone selects one of them to be part of their family. They have raised money and donated resource to our shelter, recently funding a dog trail and an adoption room.

The Town's Emergency Management program has matured to the point that it has been instrumental in dealing with a number of crisis situations. Most notably, this past June we experienced a "microburst" wind storm in Great Neck where thousands of trees were knocked down in minutes and the town played

a major role in restoring the Great Neck peninsula immediately after the storm and through the damage assessment period as well.

Living along Long Island Sound affords us the opportunity to host numerous waterfront and in-the-water events, including beachfront fireworks, swimming and kayak races, fishing derbies and a weekly Farmers' Market at the Town Dock. These events are either sponsored by or held with assistance from our Harbor Patrol. In addition to maintaining a presence at these functions, in 2010 the Harbor Patrol performed the vital work of a thousand boat pump-outs, 1400 stationary pump-outs, 87 waterborne assists, responded to three Fire Calls (two vessels and one upland house fire), served 15 written violation warnings and 18 appearance tickets, and actually made one Boating While Intoxicated arrest.

2010 was the first full year of operation for our Department of Services for the Aging, run by Evelyn Roth, which oversees one of our flagship programs, Project Independence. Of all the signature programs of my administration, perhaps this one has generated the most inquiries and involvement from the community. As our senior population grows across the country and here at home, Project Independence connects seniors who live in the Town with numerous services that assist them in staying rooted in their homes and in their communities across North Hempstead. Connecting seniors to partially-subsidized taxi rides so they can go shopping for food and make visits to their doctors, developing services aimed at homebound seniors, offering flu shots and access to social workers – these are just a sample of what Project Independence does every day. The link to these services is 311, and the response has been impressive: In 2010, DOSA received 17,183 Service Requests, which is just over 10% of ALL Service Requests Town-wide. Since September, the department is averaging more than 500 SRs a week. Two thirds of all DOSA SRs in 2010 were related to the Taxi Program. Just as impressive is that in the face of all this demand the average Response Time for a DOSA SR is a single day.

But the story of Project Independence isn't just numbers, it's about people. With us today are the ROMEO's – otherwise known as Retired Older Men Eating Out. Brought together through Project Independence, the group, who's members come from East Williston, Great Neck, and Port Washington, meets regularly, at local restaurants and in Town facilities, where they talk about sports, their families, and their days in the service, bonding over stories and shared experiences. Let's welcome **Jack Hammer, Irving Eisenberg, Dr. Lou Pasternak, Paul Glicksman, Gerald Peretsman, and David Linden**, the North Hempstead ROMEOs.

When talking about town government, one of the key municipal functions at this level is planning. As I try to paint a picture of the volume of work that we do on a daily basis, I truly believe that the folks that work behind the scenes as professionals and public servants make a real difference in people's lives. Long before there is a community center or hiking trail, Commissioner Mike Levine and his group perform the feasibility studies and various required analyses that ultimately become our most valued assets. Their current project list includes the New Cassel Community Center, North Sheets Creek Restoration, Bar Beach Wetlands Restoration, the Blue Way Trail, Manhasset Bay Walk, Land Acquisition for Open Space Preservation, a Green Fuel Depot, just to name a few. They handle the zoning analysis of every site plan application that comes before the town board and it is they that find the fault lines in

applications, large and small, giving the town board the chance to rectify problems before the even occur.

And, when we talk about planning in the Town of North Hempstead, our community visionings have had a major impact on what these communities will look like in the years to com. New Cassel is one of the most successful of such efforts. After many years of planning and hard work, we are now seeing hopes for revitalization come to fruition. New homeowners are moving into the community, and new businesses taking root. Today, we are fortunate to have with us two of those new business owners.

Robert Weinberg, a life-long Westbury resident, has brought a new dental practice to Prospect Avenue. Partnering with Doctors **Arora and Sood**, Mr. Weinberg, a medical consultant, has launched this dental practice at 701 Prospect Avenue, which will treat residents who have no insurance and provide free consultation, cleanings and screenings to children.

Leslie Davis, another Westbury native, has brought more than 30 years of hair care and cosmetology experience to Prospect Avenue. Ms. Davis owned and operated a beauty salon on Post Avenue in the Village of Westbury for many years, and teaches cosmetology at Nassau BOCES. She says she was prompted, even amidst raised eyebrows, to establish her new salon in New Cassel because she felt strongly about being part of the movement to turn the previously blighted community around. "The previous generation had a vision that was lost," she said "I want to help reignite that dream."

Let us thank both Robert Weinberg and Leslie Davis for their commitment to the revitalization of New Cassel.

Where Planning does zoning, our Buildings Department also handles thousands of applications making sure that codes are met and standards are kept. In 2010, the department, directed by Commissioner Kevin Cronin, received 14,219 service requests, issued 4053 permits, with each inspector completing an average of almost 40 inspections per week. The next step for this department is national accreditation and we will be making announcements in that regard in the coming months.

There is still so much more that is done by our various departments. Our Public Works Department under Commissioner Paul DiMaria oversees our construction projects form parking lots to community centers, and also oversees our lighting district which is responsible for maintaining the thousands of street lights that light our local streets at night.

Our Administrative Services Department under Commissioner Peter Hoda handles many of our facilities including Town Hall and also oversees our Green Team which picked up 12,940 pounds of litter off our streets in 2010 while also organizing our Geese Peace operation where we oil goose eggs to humanely reduce the geese population in our area.

Our Town Attorney's office under the leadership of Richard Finkel handles the multitude of legal matters in the town where millions of dollars are at stake. They also prosecute the hundreds of code, building, and zoning violations that our Public Safety and Buildings inspectors issue, almost 900 cases initiated this year alone.

Our Human Resources Department under the direction of Jo-Anne Taormina handles our personnel matters and, by the way, now makes benefits available at cost to our volunteer firefighters.

Our Comptrollers Office has also made great strides. When I became Supervisor we had one CPA in that office, we now have six. Comptroller Kathleen Mitterway and her staff have now successfully completed our CAFR document (Comprehensive Annual Financial Report) five years in a row, with the most recent one completed earlier than ever before. The other part of this office in which I take great pride is the Internal Audit function, which allows management to turn a mirror on itself and conduct targeted investigations of operations in order to determine if correct procedures are being followed, developing them when we find any deficiencies.

The tens of thousands of people who come to town events, festivals, and special programs can thank the Department of Community Services for the great time that they had as this department is responsible for our public events, senior programs, youth programs, and all town festivals and special events. Commissioner Kim Corcoran and her team do an excellent job making sure our events are safe, fun and even educational.

The Business and Tourism Development Corporation also works on big events, particularly the upcoming Gold Coast International Film Festival. Ian Seigel and Louise Fishman have worked tirelessly to make this Film Festival a success, and we all look forward to an exciting event this coming June 1st to 5th. Expect to hear more soon.

Another of the basic municipal functions that we provide involves garbage. One person's garbage is another person's treasure. Especially when it can be recycled. Igor Sikoric, who oversees our Solid Waste Management facility, handles hundreds of thousands of tons of waste each year making sure it is properly disposed of. Igor, working with Fran Reid, also handles our recycling efforts and our pharmaceutical take back programs.

- In 2010, there were 530 calls about e-Waste to 311 (a new SR in 2010).
- 311 calls about our STOP program went from 1084 to 1143 (a 5% increase from 2009 to 2010)
- The Recycling Informational SR that was added to SWMA in late 2009 had 668 calls in 2010
- In 2010, participation in the In-School Paper Recycling Program (the Weigh-In Program) increased from 8 schools in 8 districts (one in each) to 15 schools across 9 districts. In the current academic year to-date, students have recycled 20,803 pounds of paper, equal to 10.4 tons or 177 trees.
- SWMA took in 121 tons of e-Waste in 2010, 25 tons more than in 2009. Of the 121 tons, approximately 20 tons came from schools.
- In 2010, the town-wide school recycling program (in which Winters Brothers carts recycling from participating school districts to the transfer station) brought in 402.7 tons of comingled plastic and glass and paper. The program averaged 2.5 tons of comingled recyclables 5.3 tons of paper each week.
- The 2010 overall recycling rate for the town is 23%. The residential-only recycling rate was 11.3% in 2010

Compiling all this data takes a lot of time and energy. Budget and Performance Management Director Dave Gottesman and his staff crunch numbers every day, meet with Departments on a regular basis to track their performance, and keeps me up to date on how the Town is performing.

TownStat has also been utilized in the Housing Authority meetings to provide oversight, transparency, and accountability in order to benefit the residents at these facilities. At each Housing Authority meeting the numbers, types, and locations, of all Housing Authority Service Requests are reviewed and each issue's outcome and resolution is reported. The volume of Housing Authority SRs increased from 228 SRs in 2009 to 323 SRs in 2010.

Of course we also have our Town Clerk's office run by Town Clerk. Leslie's office records and preserves all of records and she does a magnificent job handling the Town Clerk responsibilities. She has recently been recognized.... And talking about vital statistics, In 2010 there were 5,968 babies born in the Town, 1,945 deaths in the Town – each of which require official paperwork to be produced. Her office also issued 909 Marriage Licenses, and the Clerk herself performed 61 resident marriages and 36 non-resident marriage ceremonies, (97 total).

Our Receiver of Taxes Charlie Berman, one of the newest officials here in North Hempstead is doing a great job as well. His office, by the way, collects over 1 billion dollars a year in taxes and then distributes them to the various governments such as the county, town, school districts and special districts.

I have thrown a lot of numbers at you today, but looking at them together, they tell a story not only about the level at which we are performing as a town, but that the vision I had for the Town's management and service delivery all those years ago is now being realized.

The goals that I had my sights set on for the Town back in my first and second terms, and the new initiatives I set in motion are now coming to fruition to benefit all Town residents. It cannot be denied that change is slow in coming, and that lasting change is built slowly from the ground up. We are running the Town in a smarter and more thoughtful way than ever before, and a piece of the foundation for this is 311 and TownStat. We are doing innovative things here: this is smart government that offers never-before-seen levels of access, transparency and accountability. Committing to 311/TownStat years ago has resulted in the ability for Town residents to reach their elected officials and Town services effortlessly, and simultaneously allowed Town leadership and management to ensure prompt and efficient responses to residents' concerns, accurate answers to their questions, and up to date information on Town operations to be utilized in decision making.

The data we collect, analyze, and report has many uses: evaluation of our operations and personnel, communicating our work product, budgeting, promoting and marketing our events, celebrating our successes, as well as learning and improving.

By making the most out of the technologies we have invested in, we have enabled ourselves to quantify our work, allowing us to responsibly allocate resources and become more efficient as an organization. Instead of phones constantly ringing in every department, only the issues and queries that need to escalate reach beyond the call center. This has allowed us to manage headcount, but more importantly it has freed up our staff to tackle the innovative and impactful projects that have become the signature of my administration: Project Independence, Recycling/Environmental Activism, and effective and responsive Code Enforcement. All these are things that improve the quality of life here in our town.

And the recognition from outside the Town is what confirms our results and successes: CNN/Money Magazine rankings, the 2009 DEC Award, and an A grade in recycling from Citizens Campaign for the Environment.

The bottom line is that the Town of North Hempstead is not government as usual. It's government that works – and I'm proud to lead this government as your Supervisor.

Thank you, and God Bless the Town of North Hempstead.