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EPA dredges Old Mill Creek

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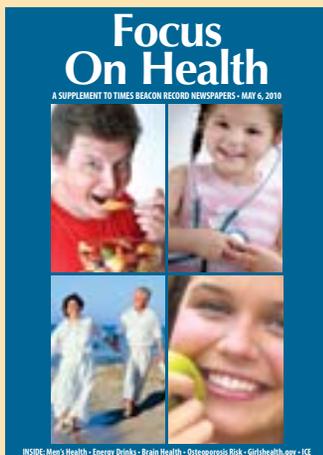
The northern end of Barnum Avenue in Port Jefferson, just south of West Broadway, is expected to remain closed around the clock through most of next week while the federal Environmental Protection Agency oversees the dredging of Old Mill Creek. Barnum, under which flows the creek at the site of the closure, serves a residential neighborhood as well as providing an alternate route for motorists traveling through the village.

The dredging is being done in preparation for the construction of a groundwater pump and treatment facility nearby, Keith Glenn, the EPA's on-scene coordinator said Monday. The work is part of the Superfund cleanup of Lawrence Aviation Industries.

Northbound traffic on Barnum heading for West Broadway is being detoured along Caroline Avenue and Brook Road. Southbound traffic from West Broadway cannot get through on Barnum during the dredging.

Barnum roadblock

Photo by D. Willinger



Focus on Health

Prostate cancer vaccine, stroke awareness, 'Legal drugs our kids are taking' Inside this week

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Lacrosse marathon

Comsewogue's Tom Cleary #10 takes a victory lap after scoring the winning goal Tuesday evening in boys lacrosse against Shoreham-Wading River with 1:24 remaining in the fourth overtime period. *Photo by John Moro*

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Spring clean for Old Mill Creek

EPA oversees, pays for dredging

BY DAVE WILLINGER
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While neighborhood residents and area travelers get used to detouring around the northern end of Barnum Avenue for about 10 days, a crew of eight contract workers hired by the federal Environmental Protection Agency will be busy clearing out sediments clogging Old Mill Creek, Keith Glenn, the EPA on-scene coordinator said Monday. The job also involves removing debris from that modest waterway, including dead vegetation, Glenn said. A score of soggy softballs are also expected to finally be removed from the creek and pond bordering the popular ballfield at Caroline Avenue Park.

The dredge spoils will be dried on site in filtration boxes for a couple of days, then hauled away to the landfill in Yaphank operated by Brookhaven's Department of Waste Management, Glenn said. However, town waste management Commissioner Ed Hubbard Tuesday said he is still waiting on paperwork from the EPA before the landfill will accept the spoils. Hubbard, who used to work for the Department of Environmental Conservation, said his office had received "lab analysis for the dredge spoils," which, he said, have been "deemed nonhazardous" and which meet DEC criteria to be used at the landfill as "alternate daily cover." That evaluation confirmed a statement by Glenn, who said tests of samples from the dredge site had levels of volatile organic compounds "not exceeding regulatory limits or requirements." Those VOCs are associated with pollution migrating underground from the former Lawrence Aviation Industries manufacturing site on Sheep Pasture Road. LAI is a federal Superfund cleanup site.

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Photo by D. Willinger

Top right: EPA on-scene coordinator Keith Glenn is overseeing the dredging of Old Mill Creek.

Cost of getting clean EPA finally ponies up

BY DAVE WILLINGER
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The cost of the dredging of the Old Mill Creek in Port Jefferson is being paid for by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, out of its budget for the Lawrence Aviation Industries Superfund cleanup.

EPA on-scene coordinator Keith Glenn put "a rough estimate" of the cost of the dredging at \$150,000 and said that money will be taken from the \$1.8 million budget for the off-site groundwater pump and treat facility to be built nearby, most likely at the western end of Caroline Avenue Park.

Paying for the dredging of sediment in Old Mill Creek was one point of contention discussed last February at a stakeholder meeting in Village Hall, convened by Congressman Tim Bishop at the urging of Mayor Margot Garant.

The mayor and village trustees had been faced with rising costs stemming from pollution at Lawrence Aviation Industries, a former manufacturing site on Sheep Pasture Road.

Officials from the federal Environmental Protection Agency

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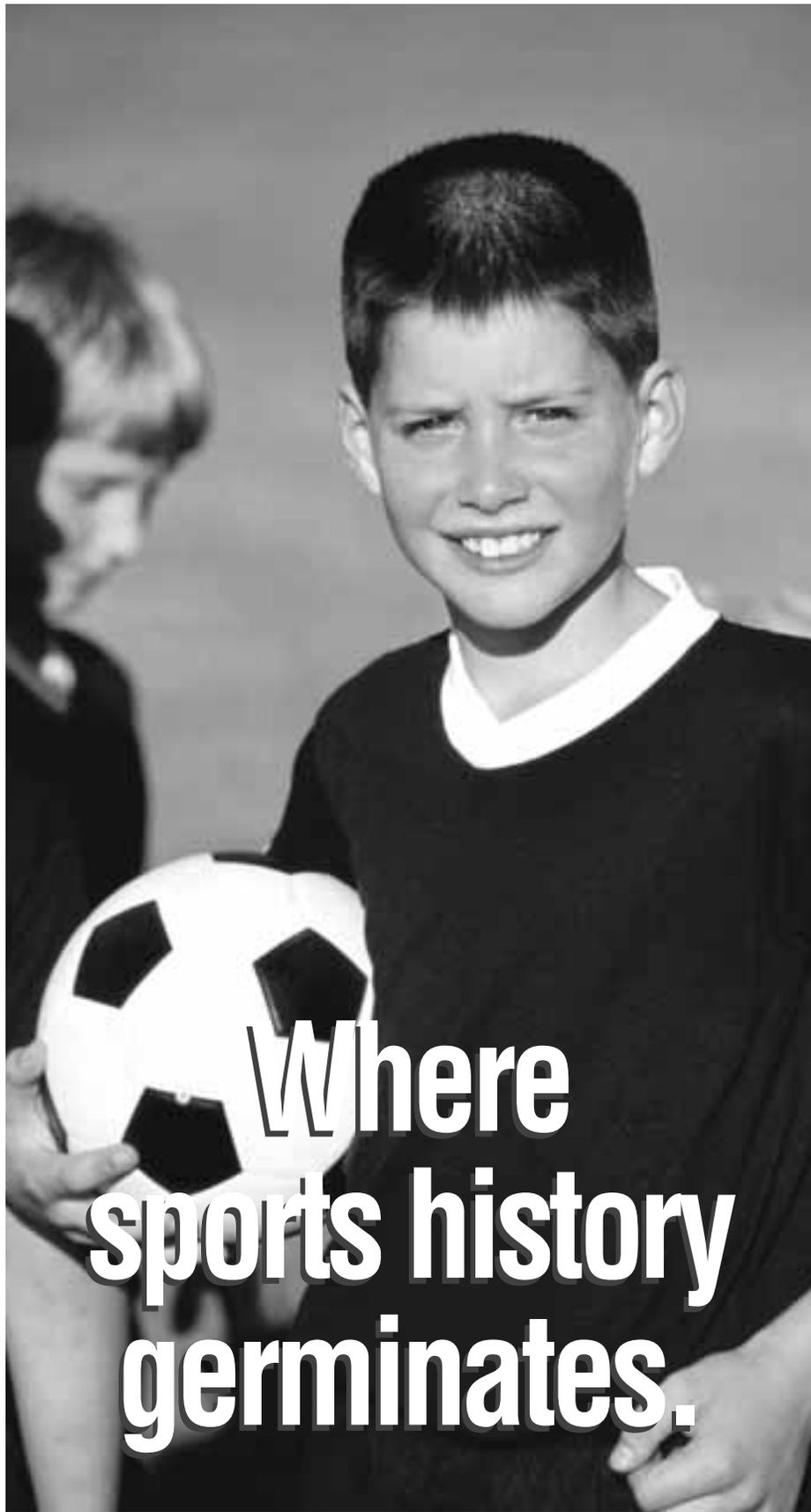
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Dredging

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But before the Town will accept the spoils — a relatively modest amount of sediment estimated at somewhere between five and 10 truckloads — Hubbard said the EPA must set up an account with his department and agree to the price charged by the town. In addition, the trucking company that will be bringing the material must first be vetted by private investigators working for the town. Those are the regulations in place at Brookhaven's Department of Waste Management, according to Hubbard, who explained the strict protocol: "It's the garbage business. It's hard to find somebody who's perfectly fine."

The unclogging of Old Mill Creek is prelude to the construction nearby of a pump and treat facility that will remove VOCs from the water in the underground toxic plume. That water treatment facility is expected to operate 24/7 for up to 30 years, EPA officials have said.

Groundwater treated in the plant will be discharged into the creek. Glenn said the current dredging is being done to assure Old Mill Creek "will handle any discharge we put into it" and "to prevent any localized flooding." He also said his agency will maintain Old Mill

Creek during the decades of groundwater remediation.

The site for the treatment facility is still being finalized, according to Glenn who, along with other EPA officials, will work in Port Jefferson overseeing its construction. The primary location for the facility is the western end of Caroline Avenue Park. In order to build there, the EPA, in conjunction with the offices of Sen. Ken LaValle (R-Port Jefferson) and Assemblyman Steve Englebright (D-East Setauket), is pursuing the state's required parkland alienation process, mandated whenever designated parkland is to be used for another purpose. It requires the governor's authorization. Glenn said Gov. David Paterson could sign the bill as early as June, in which case the EPA would be ready to start building "fairly quickly." The conceptual design has already been submitted to the village for review, he said, and the plant's exterior would be built in accordance to the "architectural theme" of the neighborhood.

Mayor Margot Garant on Tuesday said she is pleased with Glenn's handling of the job. "Things have really moved ahead very nicely," Garant said, since the EPA's on-scene coordinator arrived.

Fact sheets from the EPA about the dredging project are available at Village Hall.

Getting clean

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Agencylong claimed their hands — and purse strings — were tied when it came to paying for or reimbursing specific costs associated with the cleanup, including the parkland alienation process and the dredging.

'I really do give

Bishop's office credit.'

— MAYOR MARGOT GARANT

What caused the change of heart? At the February meeting Bishop (D-Southampton) said, "I think it is un-

fair to taxpayers of the village," to incur costs associated with the Superfund cleanup. Garant Tuesday called it a concerted effort spearheaded by the village but with help from a number of

elected officials, naming in particular Assemblyman Steve Englebright (D-Setauket), and Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand and Chuck Schumer. But the mayor stressed, "I really do give Bishop's office credit" for getting the EPA to pick up the tab for the dredging.



Golf for Friends of Karen

Friends of Karen is hosting its eighth annual golf outing on Tuesday, May 11, at Meadow Brook Golf Club in Jericho. Presented by Capital One Bank, the event will honor Susan Kiesel, senior vice president, regional executive at Capital One Bank. Friends of Karen serves children from birth to 21 who are diagnosed with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses

with services including household expenses, transportation for treatment, hospital and doctor co-payments, childcare for siblings and bereavement support. The organization serves the New York Tri-State area, and in 2009 helped 1,344 children and their families. For information, call Patricia Conway at 473-1768, ext. 303; or visit the website www.friendsofkaren.org.