

Around LI

NASSAU COUNTY Legislator hosts tax grievance workshops

Nassau County Legis. Carrié Solages (D-Elmont) is hosting free tax grievance workshops in January and February for Long Islanders.

Tax grievances must be filed to the assessment review commission by March 1 in Nassau.

The workshops will be held:

- Tomorrow, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Elmont Public Library, 700 Hempstead Tpke. in Elmont
- Jan. 24, 7-9 p.m., Gateway Christian Center, 502 N. Central Ave. in Valley Stream
- Jan. 30, 1-3 p.m., Elmont Public Library
- Feb. 8, 1-3 p.m., Gateway Christian Center

For more information, contact Solages' office at 516-571-6203.

— STEFANIE DAZIO

MIDDLE ISLAND Traveling exhibit of botanical illustrations

An exhibit of 20 meticulous, scientifically accurate color pencil illustrations of Long Island's native plants is making its way around the region in a series of monthly showings at libraries, nature and cultural centers.

Artist Diane Bouchier of Stony Brook said the illustrations are intended to raise awareness of pollinator-friendly plants — those whose nectar and pollen attract bumblebees, flies and beetles. Featured plants include Carolina rose, blue verbena, asters and ironweed.

Bouchier, a retired sociology professor who taught at Stony Brook University and founded the American Society of Botanical Artists, studied scientific illustration at Harvard's Peabody Museum and botanical illustration at The New York Botanical Garden. She said it took her about 10 days to complete each drawing, working from plant samples in a studio. "This is slow art," she said.

Botanical illustration dates to antiquity, she said, and is enjoying a renaissance with "people who are interested in gardening or aware of the ecological crisis. People are once again looking at plants."



CENTER MORICHES. Jonathan Mordekovich, 16, of the Lynbrook High team, lines up their robot during the second qualifier for the FIRST Tech Challenge, at Center Moriches High yesterday. ■ **Top LI, NYC photos:** newsday.com/topphotos

The exhibit, created in cooperation with the Long Island Native Plant Initiative, is at the Longwood Public Library in Middle Island through February before moving to Sweetbriar Nature Center in Smithtown.

Bouchier will teach a class on botanical drawing at Gallery North in Setauket starting March 19.

— NICHOLAS SPANGLER

GLEN COVE IDA committee aims to speed up talks

The Glen Cove Industrial Development Agency on Tuesday created a committee that officials say will speed up the process of attracting new businesses to the city.

The board of the IDA, a quasi-municipal agency that, among other things, approves tax breaks and exemptions, voted unanimously to create a transaction committee.

Currently, companies typically first approach IDA's executive director, Deputy Mayor Barbara Peebles, about locating in the city, and about

potential financial incentives for doing so, said Milan Tyler, the IDA's legal counsel. Then the companies can wait weeks for the next IDA meeting for board members to discuss the matter, Tyler said.

The transaction committee, which could quickly convene, would allow companies to get an early sense as to whether the IDA would be in favor of incentives, Tyler said. That makes Glen Cove more competitive, because companies often look at multiple municipalities for potential relocation, he said.

The committee will be composed of the IDA's chairman, Mayor Reginald Spinello, its administrative director, Ann Fangmann, and Tyler.

Spinello is the only one of the four IDA board members on the committee, which means unless other board members attend a meeting, there is no quorum that would trigger notice of a public meeting.

Tyler said the early contact with the IDA, through Peebles, already is private. When a proposal comes before the IDA

board, a public hearing and discussion still will be required. In addition, he said, other board members will be notified of committee meetings, and if three of the four members are there, it would be a public meeting, with legally required notice, Tyler said.

— DAVID OLSON

SUFFOLK COUNTY More free classes for help quitting smoking

Free classes to help Suffolk County residents kick cigarette smoking habits will be offered into the spring in four locations.

The county's "Learn to Be . . . Tobacco Free" program helps participants break their addiction with the help of counseling, planning, support and medications, if warranted.

"We know more than ever about what works and what doesn't," Suffolk County Health Commissioner Dr. James Tomarken said in a statement. "Studies have shown that smokers who try to quit smoking using a combination of behavioral support and

medicine are three times more likely to be successful than those who try to stop smoking without support."

Classes will be held on Tuesdays at HRHCare in Shirley, 550 Montauk Hwy., from Feb. 7 to March 14, and at the Suffolk County Department of Health in the North County Complex Building at 725 Veterans Hwy. in Hauppauge from Feb. 14 to March 21.

Thursdays classes will be held at HRHCare in Coram, 82 Middle Country Rd., from Feb. 2 to March 9, and at the Long Island Cancer Help and Wellness Center at 32 Park Ave. in Bay Shore from Feb. 23 to March 30.

"Reunions" for participants are also scheduled for about a month after the classes end.

All classes run from 6 to 7 p.m. A nominal fee will be charged for medications for medically eligible participants, officials said.

For more information or to register for the classes in Shirley or Bay Shore, call 631-853-3187; for Hauppauge and Coram, call 631-853-2928.

— SARAH ARMAGHAN