

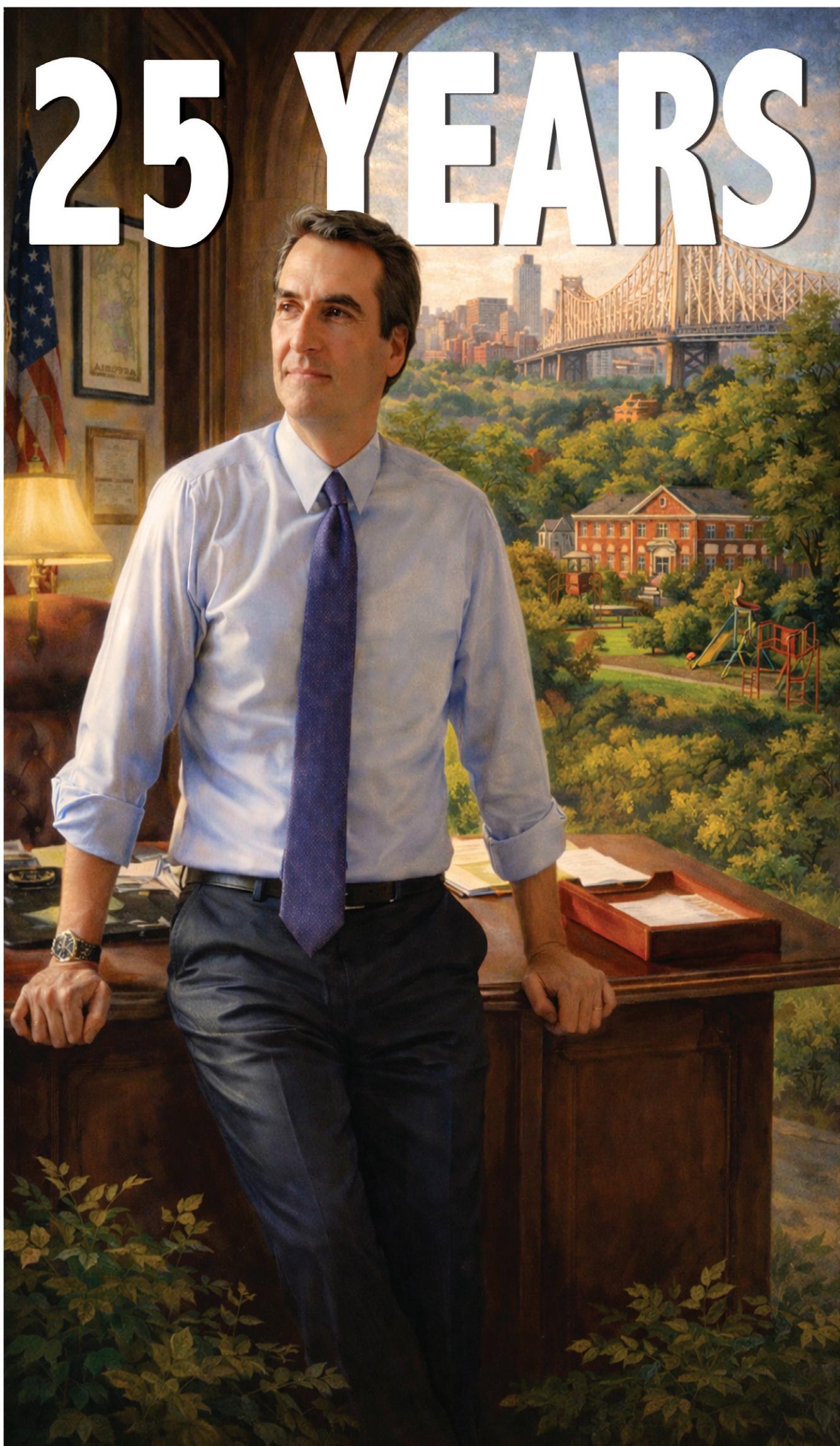
# WOODSIDE HERALD

SERVING SUNNYSIDE-WOODSIDE AND LONG ISLAND CITY

VOL. 93 NO. 7

WOODSIDE, L.I.C., N.Y. FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2026

FREE



State Sen. Michael Gianaris announced this week that he will not seek re-election in 2026, ending more than 25 years representing Western Queens in Albany, according to reporting by City & State.

Gianaris, the Deputy Majority Leader of the New York State Senate, has served neighborhoods including Astoria, Woodside, Sunnyside, Elmhurst and Ridgewood since first winning election to the State Assembly in 2000 and later to the Senate in 2010. Over that time, he became one of the most senior members of the Senate Democratic leadership and a consistent figure in Albany during periods of both divided and unified government.

In his announcement, Gianaris said family considerations played a major role in his decision. City & State reported that he cited the challenges of balancing legislative responsibilities with raising young children and caring for family members. He indicated that stepping away from elected office would allow him to focus more fully on his role at home after decades in public service.

During his tenure, Gianaris served in leadership through multiple election cycles and changes in control of the Senate. News reports note that he was part of internal negotiations and conference leadership during a period when Democrats secured and later expanded their majority in Albany. His role placed him in regular involvement with budget discussions, legislative scheduling and negotiations tied to statewide policy priorities. He has also remained a visible presence in Western Queens, where his office handled constituent services and local matters involving housing, transportation and neighborhood development, according to published reports. Like many senior lawmakers, Gianaris balanced district responsibilities with statewide leadership duties, maintaining offices focused on assisting residents with government services and agency coordination. Political observers have noted that his departure will mark the end of a long period of continuity for the district's representation in Albany. Because he has held the seat for more than a decade and previously represented much of the same area in the Assembly, many voters have known him as a fixture in Western Queens politics.

His decision will leave the 12th Senate District seat open in the 2026 election, giving voters in Western Queens the opportunity to choose new representation. No successor has yet been announced, and attention is expected to turn toward potential candidates in the coming months.

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# HOW TO DISCUSS YOUR MENTAL HEALTH WITH OTHERS

by Stan Popovich

It can be frustrating to struggle with your mental health and to get your family and friends to understand where you are coming from. Although most people may be understanding, there is usually one or two people who will make things more challenging for you. As a result, here are six suggestions on how to deal with the people you know regarding your mental health situation.

**1. Listen to the professionals:** Your friends may mean well, but when it comes down to it, the professionals are aware of your circumstances more than anyone. It is important that you listen and follow the advice from your doctor or medical professional rather than following the advice from your friends and other people you may know.

**2. Don't argue with others:** It is important that you do not get into arguments with those who are giving you a tough time. It is not your job to worry about how others may view your circumstances. Focus on managing your mental health rather than trying to get everyone's approval.

**3. Choose your friends wisely:** Distance yourself from those who won't make an effort to help understand what you are going through. You need to surround yourself with positive and supportive people. If you have problems or issues with a particular person, then it's best to keep your distance and hang out with those people who are more supportive.

**4. Attend a mental health support group:** There are many mental health awareness support groups in any given area. Many hospitals, churches, and counselors in your area will be able to provide you with a list of these organizations. These groups will be aware of your situation and can give you additional advice regarding your concerns.

**5. You are not alone:** There are millions of people around the world who struggle with their fears, anxieties, and depression. Many of your relatives and friends more than likely struggled with anxiety and stress sometime in their life. Do not feel that you are alone when it comes to your mental health situation because there are all kinds of people around you who can relate.

**6. Your goal is to get better:** Focus on how you can handle the anxieties and stresses in your life rather than arguing with others who are giving you a difficult time. This isn't a public relations event where you need to get approval from everyone. This is your life, and you need to be more concerned about getting your life back on track rather than pleasing everyone else.



## Lunar New Year Celebration

Monday, February 23, 5-8pm

Helen Marshall Cultural Center at Queens Borough Hall  
120-55 Queens Boulevard, Kew Gardens, NY 11424

  
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## QUINN MINUTE – VALENTINE'S DAY

by Rix Quinn

Millions celebrate February 14 by giving flowers, candy, and cards to express romantic love. And some buy presents for their spouses, too. Yes, Valentine's Day offers ladies the opportunity to declare affectionate thoughts with a lovely card. Many men, however, know they should spend a lot of money, or else they might experience discomfort.

In ancient times, a prehistoric man gave his girlfriend a practical gift – like a goat – to show admiration. His girlfriend and her family could feed from it. This was called “milking a compliment.” It's speculated that Valentine's Day originated 2500 years ago as Lupercalia, a festival to honor the god Lupercus with a lottery. Young ladies put their names in a giant container, and young men randomly drew a partner. At the end of a year – if the man wasn't either married or dead – he could draw for a different partner. About this same time, the card-giving tradition started too. Postage was really cheap back then, because air mail was delivered by pigeon.

Today, just about everybody celebrates Valentine's Day. Elementary school children exchange cards with classmates. Middle schoolers write anonymous notes to their secret crushes. Older teens might bestow presents, kisses, or mononucleosis.

If you're a guy, here are three hints:

1. Buy your girlfriend a corsage; 2. Pick out a real mushy card for her. Look for romantic messages full of words like “sweet,” “love,” or “honey.” Avoid rhymes that contain the words “contagious” or “burp.” 3. Finally, take her to a nice restaurant for dinner. But go indoors, don't use the drive-through.

# LOVE IS

by Dr. Sharon M. Cadiz

There are many things to write about and many perspectives to embrace, but today I choose to focus on love and the eternal question: "What is love?" Poets and philosophers generally address this type of inquiry; however, I believe that we are at a moment in time when love may actually be our ultimate salvation and guide out of some of our most troubling forms of suffering. Today, there may be a greater readiness for love in each of our hungry souls. The person addicted to substances suffers. The person unable to love suffers. The person who is loved, but unable to feel love suffers. The person who loves too much suffers. If love and suffering are indeed such close 'kin,' it behooves us to create a bridge that we can traverse in our moments of need. Sometimes suffering communicates our needs and defines exactly when, where, how and why we are lacking love.

We often compartmentalize and limit our expression and understanding of love by confining it to an occasion or a special day such as Valentine's Day, but it requires so much more. Over the years, I have read stories related to the origin of Valentine's Day. This year, with eagerness, I am again curious to rediscover the origin story. When I struck out on my mission to refresh my memory of why we celebrate Valentine's Day, my search initially featured only references to the "St. Valentine's Day Massacre." This alone may reveal more than I had even hoped to discover about the collective consciousness and where we often direct our attention. In spite of this minor setback, I persevered and improved the labeling of my search to be more specific. What I found was information about how the celebration evolved from "a blend of ancient fertility rituals (Lupercolia); roots "in 3rd century legends of a priest martyred for defying Emperor Claudius II's marriage ban;" and that in the 14th century it was transformed into "a modern romantic courtship-focused tradition." Emperors, rulers and dictators who fail to recognize the power of love usually face an ultimate downfall. Emperor Claudius II clearly miscalculated the importance of marriage in favor of his belief that married men would make "poor soldiers or might be reluctant to go to war; and although I don't know much about his reign, I do know that he may be forgotten, but marriage as an institution lives on. Mussolini underestimated the Italian people's love of pasta and that likely contributed to him losing favor. I can't help thinking that Robert Frost's poem "Mending Wall" holds the secret to why the Berlin Wall eventually fell because, as he said, "Something there is that doesn't love a wall." What I see is that sometimes power seeking leaders don't see the overwhelming power of love even when it is unsuspectedly present in a 'bad bunny' that unites people in an uncommon way.

For me, all of this turns out to be better than expected for providing guidance toward a deeper understanding of the dynamics that are culminating in what Valentine's Day has come to mean. Like love itself, Valentine's Day has traveled a rocky road that often brings both to a trite reduction of their essence, but not this year; and not today. What I find even more interesting is the fact that a tyrant's decree could not stop marriage and according to legend, the bold actions of a priest defied the order in favor of love; symbolically represented by matrimonial union. I have concluded that St. Valentine was a revolutionary force in his time. The story of Valentine's Day also includes a deeper origin that goes back to primal roots related to fertility with its own connection to how we come to be. The full picture takes us from fertility to courtship and marriage, forming a marvelous trail to explore how rituals and traditions can sometimes be guideposts to love.

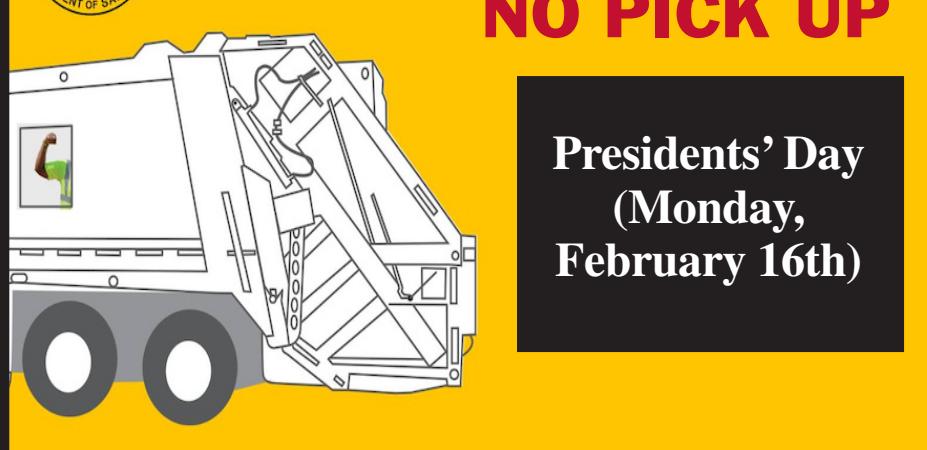
With all my investigating, the question remains: "What is love?" Perhaps it cannot be defined in large, global terms; maybe it is at the level of personal experience where it holds meaning. Maybe love is embodied in the depths of safe touch; a caring remark; or a nurturing relationship that keeps us transforming suffering into love; the absence of love into suffering; and the power of love into positive change. Whatever is the answer or definition, love is important enough to take up space in a day; a month; a year and an eternity. Happy Valentine's Day!



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# LOVE YOUR BIKE

[Re-Print]

by Cyclo Pete

Happy Valentine's Day, Woodsiders! Do you aspire, desire, or feel obligated to show love today? Well, that may be beside the point, because this column is actually about bike maintenance. But while we're on it, some attention and respect for the day to day conditions of our two-wheeled personal mobility assistants can be a form of love. And if you treat your bike well, it'll pay you back by giving you a smooth and safe ride. So read on for some maintenance tips for your bike!

## Been A While?

If your reaction to reading this is along the lines of where did I put my bike, you may have some work to do on your relationship. But don't fear, bike frames are sturdy, and with relatively standardized parts, even the gnarliest of rusted chains can be replaced! Don't believe me? Search for videos on vintage bike refurbishing and you'll be amazed at what can be done to bring your ride back into the 21st century. But if there's real damage to multiple components, particularly the back wheel and gearing mechanism, you'll need to ask your mechanic if it's worth restoring or just buying a new one. The good news is that, generally speaking, a \$100-\$200 tuneup will do wonders for almost any bike.

## Keep It Clean

Living in and moving around the city is a pretty filthy endeavor. Runoff and particulate matter make our streets a sooty mess. The dust that creates the slush we have at this time of year is not a seasonal thing, and will affect your bike any time it rains in the summer. A mechanic once told me that 90% of a bike tuneup is a bike cleanup. So in order to keep your bike in good shape, consider cleaning it regularly. This can be as simple as an occasional shammy when it rains, or can include some basic lubrication of the chain. Regular cleaning can cut down the time, cadence, and cost of maintaining your ride considerably.

Have you given your bike some love lately? Don't worry about it today if you've got bigger fish to fry. But consider February a great time to dust off your ride and take it in for service. This way you can be ready for better weather and longer nights next month. Spring is around the corner, but until then, Happy Valentines Day, Woodside!



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# 108th Precinct Community Council Meeting

Join us on Tuesday, February 24, 2026  
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at The Culture Lab LIC, 5-25 46th Ave,  
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VALENTINE'S  
DAY

The Community Council meets once every month on the last Tuesday of each month. (Except in July, August, and December) All are welcome to attend the meetings. We provide community updates and crime stat reports.

For Additional information please contact us  
at: [108communitycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:108communitycouncil@gmail.com)



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