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Official Newsletter of

THE SHIELDS - LONG ISLAND, INC.

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MINEOLA, NY 11501

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LONGISLANDSHIELDS.COM

Sept/Oct 2026

“Never Forget”





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PUBLIC RELATIONS
Peter Guggenheim

GENERAL COUNSEL
Peter Caso
516-937-5253

PHOTOGRAPHER
Dom Cammarata
516-384-4042
Barry Brown
516-557-9180

SHIELDS CHIROPRACTOR
Dr. Robert Goebel
516-248-3647

HOME SECURITY ADVISOR
Ken Schiotis
917-751-9234

PAST PRESIDENTS
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NEXT MEETING

NEXT MEETING
Thursday September 10th

7:00 PM

@ The Coral House

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday September 12th,
Rosh Hashanah

Monday October 12th,
Columbus Day

Thursday October 29th,
Meeting @ The Coral House - Noon

Sunday November 1st,
Daylight Saving Time End (Maybe)

Tuesday November 3rd,
Election Day

Wednesday November 11th,
Veterans Day

Thursday November 26th,
Thanksgiving Day

Saturday December 5th,
Hanukkah (1st Day)

Thursday December 10th,
Meeting @ The Coral House - Noon

Friday December 25th,
Christmas Day

THE SHIELDS OF LONG ISLAND ON THE WEB:
LongIslandShields.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy summer everyone. What a strange weather pattern we've been in. It feels like we're either in a heat wave or having another torrential downpour. Either way it bears the cold and snow. As I've said, you don't have to shovel sunshine.

Unfortunately, I will start off with sad news. Past president and charter member of the Nassau County Shields, William Lombard has passed away. Also, retired Captain Arnold Howard has passed away. Please keep Bill, Arnold and their families in your prayers. May their souls and all the souls of the faithfully departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Congratulations to all our scholarship winners. It is truly one of the best meetings we run when we award these future college students scholarship money as they embark on the next chapter of their lives. The Long Island Shields wish you all the best of luck with your studies and future endeavors.

As September approaches, we prepare to mark a solemn milestone: the **25th Anniversary of the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks**. A quarter-century has passed since 2,977 innocent lives, including 343 firefighters and 71 law enforcement officers, were taken in the line of duty and in defense of our nation. While time moves forward, our pledge to **Never Forget** remains unwavering. In the coming weeks, the Long Island Shields will participate in local memorial ceremonies across Nassau and Suffolk counties to honor the supreme sacrifice of our fallen brothers and sisters, as well as those we continue to lose to 9/11-related illnesses. We encourage all members to stand with us, support the families of our heroes, and ensure that the legacy of courage displayed on September 11th lives on in every generation.

As New York State prepares for the upcoming Gubernatorial Election, public safety and

support for law enforcement must remain at the top of the ballot. The Long Island Shields are proud to reaffirm our strong support for **Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman** for Governor.

Throughout his tenure as Nassau County Executive, Bruce Blakeman has proven time and again that he puts law enforcement and public safety first. From expanding police classes and funding law enforcement resources to standing firmly against radical bail reform laws that undermine our justice system and keeping Nassau County a non sanctuary county by supporting and backing ICE, Executive Blakeman has shown the decisive leadership New York desperately needs. New York cannot afford four more years of soft-on-crime policies. We need a leader in Albany who backs the badge, protects crime victims, and restores law and order across every corner of our state. **Bruce Blakeman is that leader.**

While Long Island works to uphold public safety, our neighbors across the border in New York City are suffering under the reckless administration of Mayor Zohran Mamdani. Mayor Mamdani's anti-police rhetoric and radical political agenda continue to degrade police morale, compromise public safety, and put both active-duty officers and everyday citizens in harm's way. Rather than supporting the brave men and women of the NYPD who put their lives on the line daily, this administration continues to prioritize fringe ideological agendas over basic law enforcement and order. This "mayor" refuses to sit down with the PBA to negotiate a contract.

The Long Island Shields will continue to speak out forcefully against policies that vilify law enforcement and dismantle public safety in our region.

We bring crucial, victorious news for

continued on page 4

our retired municipal workers and law enforcement officers. The **NYC Organization of Public Service Retirees (NYCOPSR)** has scored a massive court victory, securing a **\$53 million class-action settlement** from the City of New York and EmblemHealth regarding illegal co-pays on GHI Senior Care plans.

Key Settlement Highlights:

- **\$53 Million Refund:** Full reimbursement for disputed \$15 doctor visit co-pays charged to 250,000 Medicare-eligible retirees between January 2022 and January 2023
- **Protection Frozen:** Co-pay rate increases have been legally frozen through at least the end of 2027.
- **Billions Saved:** NYCOPSR's tireless litigation efforts have saved municipal retirees over \$3 billion in healthcare costs since 2021.

This landmark ruling proves that when retirees stand united, they can successfully hold municipal leadership accountable and protect the healthcare benefits earned over a lifetime of service. We commend President Marianne Pizzitola and the legal team at NYCOPSR for their relentless defense of our municipal retirees. We must continue to make donations. We will once again be raffling off \$100 lottery scratch off board and several gift baskets at our December meeting. Raffle tickets will be sold at the September, October and December meetings. Please be as generous as your means allow.

Finally, we offer our deepest congratulations and respect to one of the most legendary figures in NYPD history, our very own: **retired Detective Randy Jurgensen**, along with his son **Randy**. A decorated Korean War veteran and Purple Heart recipient who survived the Battle of Pork Chop Hill, Detective Jurgensen went on to serve as one of the finest homicide investigators in NYPD history. Recently, Randy and his son were invited to the **White House** to meet with **President Donald Trump**, where

they were presented with the presidential signing pen used to officially designate **August 7th as Purple Heart National Day of Recognition**.

Honoring Detective Randy Jurgensen

- **Military Service:** U.S. Army Paratrooper, Korean War (3x Bronze Stars, Purple Heart)
- **NYPD Career:** Legendary Homicide Detective & Lead Investigator in the Officer Phil Cardillo case
- **National Recognition:** Honored at the White House for his service and dedication to fellow combat veterans

Detective Jurgensen represents the very highest ideals of military valor and law enforcement dedication. The Long Island Shields extend our heartfelt gratitude and congratulations to Randy and his son for receiving this extraordinary national honor.

Our next meeting is Thursday September 10th, 7pm at The Coral House. I hope to see everyone there.

Fraternally yours,
Mike Villa, President

CHAPLAIN'S REPORT

As we enter September, our thoughts naturally turn to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the attacks of September 11, 2001—a day that forever changed our nation, our profession, and our lives. For many members of our organization, September 11 is not simply a chapter in a history book; it is a lived memory. You stood at Ground Zero amid unimaginable devastation, worked alongside countless first responders, searched for survivors, recovered the fallen, and answered the call with courage and selfless dedication. The passage of twenty-five years has not diminished the weight of those memories, nor has it lessened our gratitude for the sacrifices made by so many. We remember the officers, firefighters, emergency personnel, and civilians who perished that day, and we honor all who continue to bear its physical, emotional, and spiritual burdens.

Our remembrance must be more than an annual observance. It calls us to remain committed to those who continue to suffer the lasting effects of their service. We remember our brothers and sisters who have battled illnesses linked to their time at the World Trade Center site, those who continue to struggle with unseen wounds, and the families who have carried the weight of loss for a quarter century. As a fraternal organization, we reaffirm our

promise that no member or family should ever walk alone. Through friendship, advocacy, compassion, and practical support, we continue to stand beside one another just as we did during those difficult days in September 2001.

This anniversary also reminds us of an important responsibility: to ensure that the story of September 11 is never forgotten. Today, anyone under the age of thirty has no personal memory of that day. They know it only through photographs, videos, and the stories told by those who were there. It is our duty to be faithful witnesses—to share not only the tragedy, but also the extraordinary courage, sacrifice, and unity that emerged in its aftermath. By preserving these memories and passing them on to future generations, we honor those we lost, strengthen the values of service and patriotism, and ensure that the legacy of September 11 continues to inspire those who wear the badge today and those who will wear it tomorrow.

Fr. Christopher Costigan



Amy Marie Karol Ins Agency Inc

Amy Karol, Agent

205 Sunrise Highway
Lynbrook, NY 11563
Bus 516-593-8878 Fax 516-593-1621
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RUSSELL D. MAURO

Attorney At Law

1400 WANTAGH AVENUE SUITE 102
WANTAGH, NEW YORK 11793
maurorussell@gmail.com www.mauro-law.com

Rana N. Hassan, M.D.

Internist

71 Franklin Avenue
Franklin Square, NY 11010

516-216-1690 - Office

516-216-1689 - fax



RANA MUNEERUDDIN, DDS

73 Franklin Avenue
Franklin Square, NY 11010

516-488-8261

Answering Service: 1-800-307-0533

2026 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Riley Lavelle - Attending SUNY Oswego



Tom Wilderman & Mom Rosemary accept daughter
Keira Scholarship to Hofstra University



Timmy Motto's daughter Sarah & grandson Corey presents Scholarship in His Memory to Sophia Linder - Attending Broward College



Matthew Blake receives Det. Steven McDonald scholarship - Attending SUNY Farmingdale



P.O. Peter Figoski Scholarship awarded to Casey Fernandez Attending Stevens University of Technology



Michael Biscardi, grandson of Dominick Cammarata -
Attending University of Tampa



Kevin Matthews accepts scholarship for his grandson
Timoty Kropp - Attending Clemson University



Chief of Transit Joseph Galotta



Johnny Wilde Wind \$100 Scratch-off



Cop of the Month June 2026

This months honoree is PO Joseph Wetzel currently assigned NYPD Transit Bureau Dist. 4. He was appointed to the NYPD on Jan. 3, 2019 and has spent his career in the Transit Bureau.

By October 2023 he was diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer and spent the next 18 months undergoing chemotherapy or numerous surgeries before he went into remission. Then just 1 year later while still on restricted duty his cancer came back in August 2025. He had to endure another round of chemotherapy until 3 weeks before his wedding in December 2025. By January 2026 he underwent 15 rounds of radiation.

On Feb 4,2026 while having breakfast with his father at a local diner, at approximately 0935 hours ,he heard a loud bang. An auto crash had just happened at the intersection of Routes 347 &111. With his attention focused on the accident he saw one vehicle had flipped over. He immediately ran to the scene and was informed by witnesses two occupants of the overturned vehicle were unconscious. A fire had ignited under the auto and the people were in grave danger. At this point with total disregard for his own safety or compromised medical condition , he took immediate action breaking the drivers side window with a multi tool and extricating the unconscious driver. After removing the first occupant he began to remove the second occupant with the assistance of police and fire personnel who had responded.

There is no doubt PO Wetzel was instrumental in saving the lives or preventing them from sustaining serious injuries.

The officers swift actions ,disregarding his own safety and compromised medical condition are a testament of his devotion to duty and his desire to save lives.

His actions bring honor to the NYPD,his fellow officers in the Transit Bureau and the entire law enforcement profession.

GOOD TO KNOW

Peter J. Caso, Esq.

In previous articles, we have discussed the necessity of having a solid estate plan, a Durable Power of Attorney, a Will, and a Health Care Proxy. Despite this, recent surveys have shown that only 4% of individuals have an estate plan and 24% have a Will. An estate plan is not about the wealthy or the elderly. It is about you and you protecting the people you love and ensuring your wishes are honored.

Here are a few examples of what can happen if you fail to set up an estate plan.

An estate plan not only takes care of your matters when you die, but also if and when you become incapacitated. What happens when you can't manage your own affairs during your lifetime due to a stroke, serious accident, dementia, or any other incapacitating condition? Without a durable power of attorney and healthcare proxy, the people you trust most have no legal authority to act for you. To do so, they will need to go to court under Article 81 to get authority. This process can take months and cost thousands of dollars. In the meantime, your bills may go unpaid, your investments unmanaged and your medical decisions may be made by strangers.

In New York, when an individual dies without a Will, it is referred to as dying "intestate." Generally, an administrative proceeding must be commenced in the Surrogate's Court to appoint an administrator to settle the decedent's estate. The appointed administrator will be authorized to settle the decedent's estate and to dispose of the decedent's property in accordance with the rules

of intestate succession set forth in the Estate, Powers and Trust Law (EPTL) §4-1.1. The family members who are entitled to a share of the Decedent's estate when there is no will are called "distributees"

Here are some of the intestate distributions according to the EPTL:

A spouse (husband or wife) and no children, the spouse inherits everything;

Spouse and children, the spouse inherits the first \$50,000 plus half of the balance. The children inherit everything else;

Parents, but no spouse and no children, the parents inherit everything;

Siblings (brothers or sisters), no spouse, children or parents, the siblings inherit everything.

Probate in New York can take twelve to thirty-six months and consumes significant assets in court fees, attorney fees, and administrative costs.

If you want to ensure that your assets are distributed according to your personal wishes rather than statutory formulas, a properly structured estate plan can reduce or eliminate these pitfalls while preserving more of your estate for the people you love.

Disclaimer:

This article is for education and information purposes only, and is not intended to provide legal advice. No attorney-client relationship exists or is created by the use of this article or the information provided herein. This article should not be used as a substitute for competent legal advice from a professional attorney in your state.

**STUART A. FORMAN
ATTORNEY AT LAW**

450 7TH AVENUE, STE 1304
NEW YORK, NY 10123

YANA POLISSKY-RINCON
PARALEGAL

(212) 244-0110
FAX: (212) 244-3686
FIRELAW56@AOL.COM

JOHN F. FERRANTE
MICHAEL J. GRANT

34 Hempstead Avenue
(corner of Peninsula Boulevard)
Lynbrook, NY 11563
516.599.3600
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