For your information . . .

The masthead

The box at the far left side of the page is called the "masthead." It contains the newspaper's "flag" or nameplate, and the lion logo of the parent company of the Herald Community Newspapers, Richner Communications, Inc. The masthead offers basic information about the paper and how it functions.

Brothers Stuart and Clifford Richner jointly guide the business and news operations for the 15 weekly newspapers in the Herald Community Newspaper group, including: the Nassau Herald, serving the Five Towns, and Heralds for Baldwin, Bellmore, East Meadow, Franklin Square/Elmont, Long Beach, Lynbrook/East Rockaway, Malverne/West Hempstead, Merrick, Oceanside/Island Park, Rockville Centre and Valley Stream.

The editor of each paper is responsible for the assignment, selection and placement of stories, most of which the editors and reporters write. The executive editor oversees the editorial department staff and the editorial content of all 15 newspapers in the chain.

The production department is responsible for the paper's design. The advertising and art departments produce the large, often illustrated, "display" advertisements that appear throughout the paper. They help clients decide what the ads will say and how they will look.

The classified department produces the small ads at the back of each week's paper that are arranged by headings.

The masthead also lists the paper's age, the names of its founders, its address, telephone and fax numbers and notice that the contents are copyrighted.

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New York Press Association
Lynbrook Chamber of C...
East Rockaway Ch...
...530

Editorial comment

Editorials offer the opinion of the Herald. The editorials are written by the editors, but do not necessarily represent their personal views. That is why they are unsigned: editorial comment is the newspaper's institutional voice.

The editors and publishers meet weekly to discuss positions the paper may take and how those positions will be expressed.

Most editorials respond to developments in the news, but they may also be based on independent reporting or discussions with reporters to gain information that goes beyond what has already appeared in print. Editors and the publishers may also talk with advocates for causes or experts in a field to help formulate opinions or policies. Before elections, they meet with candidates for office.

Most editorials concern local issues, but the newspaper may speak out as well on national or international questions that are part of the lives of our readers. Usually those editorials will try to address those concerns from a local perspective, since that is what we know best and what makes us different from the daily newspapers or weekly news magazines you read.

We hope our editorials are forceful without being strident and that they may persuade our readers to think and act in the best interests of the community.

Editorial cartoon

The editorial cartoons are supplied by a syndicate, which represents major cartoonists across the country and the spectrum of political opinion. They are chosen to provide thoughtful or humorous viewpoints on topics of general interest. They do *not* represent the opinion of the newspaper or its editors.

Editorial page

Editorials

DWI with children should be a felony

We can only imagine the terror that the five young children felt as their car hurtled 1.7 miles the wrong way on the Taconic Parkway in Westchester earlier this summer.

According to authorities, the driver, Diane Schuler, was drunk and high on marijuana. She died in the crash, as did four of the five children she carried in her brother's minivan. Schuler was the mother of two of the children and aunt to three of them. One of her children — 2-year-old Erin — and her three nieces — Emma, Alyson and Kate Hance, ages 8, 7 and 5 — were killed when Schuler plowed her vehicle into an SUV head-on. She also killed the SUV's three occupants, Guy Bastardi, 49, his father, Michael, 81, and their friend Daniel Longo, 74.

Only Schuler's 5-year-old son, Bryan, survived the crash.

Drunken driving is a terrible crime that imperils [illegible] driver's life but also [illegible] fortunate enough to share the road [illegible] him or her. It becomes an especially heinous crime when the drunken driver knowingly puts unwitting children in a car and speeds off.

Strangely enough, driving drunk with a child on board carries a ridiculously low misdemeanor child-endangerment charge under New York state law. That, quite simply, is absurd.

State Sen. Charles Fuschillo Jr., a Republican from Merrick, and Assemblyman Harvey Weisenberg, a Democrat from Long Beach, are proposing to raise the misdemeanor penalty to a felony charge. We support their effort. Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice, who has taken a hard line on drunken driving during her tenure, and is up for re-election this year, is voicing her support for the measure.

Under the proposed law, those who drive drunk with anyone under age 16 in the car could face up to four years in prison and be fined up to $5,000. Drunk drivers who kill a child under age 16 could face up to 25 years in prison. And drunk drivers who seriously injure a child younger than 16 could face up to 15 years' incarceration.

If enacted, the new statute would send a clear signal that children are indeed our most vulnerable citizens and deserve greater protection than is currently provided under the law.

We strongly urge the state Legislature and governor to pass Fuschillo's and Weisenberg's legislation, and we encourage you to let your state senator and Assembly member know that they, too, should enthusiastically support it. Let's take action now, not later, before yet another child dies a senseless death on our roads.

We also call on the Legislature to reflect on current DWI statutes and do whatever it takes to increase penalties for drunken driving. To our mind, the penalties are simply too light, and so too many people do not view DWI for what it is — a potentially deadly serious crime.

Rice has successfully prosecuted drunken drivers for second-degree murder under depraved indifference to human life statutes. We applaud such efforts. Those prosecutions represent a clear break from past policies of charging DWI offenders who kill with the lesser manslaughter charge. The second-degree murder charge carries a sentence of 15 years to life in prison, whereas the manslaughter charge could mean as little as a year in prison. The handful of DWI murder cases that Rice has been able to prosecute are a rare exception, however. The Legislature should consider ways to make it easier for prosecutors to charge drunken drivers who kill with murder.

The Legislature should also consider toughening penalties for all DWI convictions, even those when no one is hurt. If a gunman opened fire in a mall, we wouldn't send him home with a slap on the wrist because he failed to hit someone. Why not have the same kind of mandatory penalties for DWI that we have for weapons possession?

Driving drunk is the same as showering a crowded mall with a hail of bullets. The alcohol shouldn't excuse the murderous behavior — regardless of whether it results in death or injury.

Letters

Fiscal challenges cannot wait

To the Editor:

Once again, the New York State Legislature clearly demonstrated why it is one of the most dysfunctional governing bodies in the nation.

Being called into special session by the governor, the two Democratic majorities in their respective houses failed to reach agreements that would do what needed to be done — close our $3.7 billion budget hole, and enact comprehensive property tax reform.

Taxing and spending our way out of a fiscal recession isn't going to work, but rath[illegible] addressing the problems they cre[illegible] their irresponsible fiscal policie[illegible]ive leaders continue to ignore th[illegible] insult to injury, we are wastin[illegible]y reconvening legislative se[illegible]ny adds to the state deficit.

[illegible] come together in agreement and [illegible] state spending cuts that will ease the [illegible]ens placed on every municipality, school, business and family on Long Island and across the Empire State.

This special session was a missed opportunity to tackle our fiscal challenges. If only those in leadership positions would get off their behinds and lead.

BOB BARRA
State assemblyman
14th District

Terrorists first?

To the editor:

First, the Obama administration allowed captured terrorists all the legal benefits of American citizens. Second, he plans to close the Gitmo prison and move them to the U.S. Third, he is giving these terrorists the H1N1 flu shots before our own chil-