

FROM THE POINT

A gift for the state GOP

Call it Long Island IDC, but in the aftermath of the Amazon breakup, the leadership of the Democratic majority in the State Senate faces the real possibility of having to contend with a discontented group in their midst.

Long Island's Democratic senators are furious with Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and her deputy, State Sen. Mike Gianaris, for sinking the deal to save their political hides. With the leadership bowing to the party's far left, Long Island's members fear they are being blamed for nixing a deal many of their constituents wanted. "From what I am hearing from Long Island voters, there is a great dissatisfaction with the Democratic Senate. We need to fix that," said Jay Jacobs, head of both state and Nassau County Democrats.

Meanwhile, Republicans are licking their chops. Suffolk County GOP chair John Jay LaValle said he can see the campaign flyers with photos of Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Stewart-Cousins labeled anti-business. "We warned that this would happen if the Democrats took control, and it only took six weeks for them to prove us right," he said, predicting 2020 will be "Brian Foley and Craig Johnson all over again."

LaValle was referring to 2008, when Democrats won a two-seat majority in the State Senate, only to see it evaporate in the next election as Long Islanders punished Foley and Johnson because of their votes in favor of an Metropolitan Transportation Authority payroll tax. Since then, Democrats suffered as back benchers in part because a contingent of moderate Democrats known as the Independent Democratic Conference aligned itself with the Republican majority.

No one is predicting that any Democrats will realign with Republicans. Senate Democrats have control by a sizable margin, 39-24. However, if the Long Island six align themselves with at least two others, likely senators from similarly moderate swing suburbs such as Buffalo or the Hudson Valley, a suburban conference could demand that its priorities get attention.

— Rita Ciolli

This is excerpted from *The Point*, the daily email newsletter of the editorial board. Sign up at newsday.com/ThePoint

A sweet Valentine made a veteran's day

As a handicapped Korean War veteran who uses a walker, I take walks around the block in the summer months and pass a little girl's house. She and her family always say hello to me, and I do the same. Unfortunately, with the severe winter cold, I cannot take my walks.

But this week, the little girl surprised me with a beautiful Valentine's Day card. She brought it to the front desk at The Arbors, my assisted-living community, and asked whether I was still here.

Then she and her mother came to the recreation room and read the card to me. It said, "Dear Bernie, I just wanted to let you know somebody loves you and thanks for your service!!!" It was signed, "Love, Gracie!!!" She had drawn a big American flag and hearts big and small.

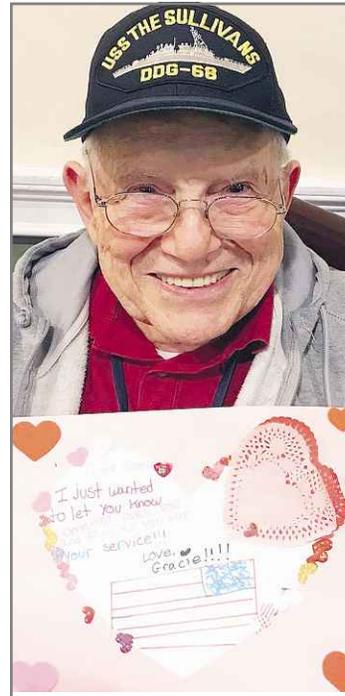
I was nearly in tears. They missed my walks and hoped I was still all right. It means so much to have such a gift to a lonely veteran of age 87.

Bernard Fradkin,
Jericho

Blinded by the lights on newer vehicles

I assume that powerful LED headlights on newer cars are intended to be a safety feature, but for whom? They're definitely not a safety feature for oncoming drivers. Many times,

JUST SAYIN'



TAVANDA BOOKER

Bernard Fradkin with his Valentine from a neighbor.

an SUV with these lights has come around a curve and hit me right in the face. Especially for older drivers, this blinding light could cause an accident.

One time while driving in the

rain, I was briefly blinded by LED lights and ran over a curb on the side of the road on a curve. I cannot believe automakers are allowed to install these. Will they also be used on tractor-trailers?

Glenn Billian,
Port Washington

Nuisance phone calls are an assault

The public is being tormented by nuisance telephone calls. Callers, frequently seeming to call from other countries, but giving names such as "John Brown," want to fix my computer, provide free braces or put various devices on my roof. They interrupt our days and have turned the phone into a weapon of assault. Older people in particular are vulnerable.

I have signed up with the National Do Not Call Registry and my phone provider's do-not-call list. Still I get these calls.

A major function of government is to protect the population from aggression. What are our local, state and federal officials doing to help? It might be difficult, but if we can put a man on the moon, surely this can be solved.

Elaine Schirmer,
Plainview

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OPINION

Terrible misunderstanding finally cleared up

BY MIKE VOGEL

Doug Adler's long nightmare is finally over.

After two years of living hell, the tennis broadcaster who was falsely accused of racism finally cleared his name last week. This despite what has become all too common on Twitter: a rush-to-judgment mob mentality.

While an ESPN tennis analyst at the Australian Open in January 2017, as all-time great Venus Williams charged the net, Adler observed that she was using what is known in ten-

nis as "the guerrilla effect," as in guerrilla warfare, where sudden ambushes occur.

Viewers unfamiliar with the term "guerrilla" went crazy, hopping on Twitter to express their outrage — how dare he call Williams a gorilla! Tweets included, "My jaw dropped when I heard this! Disgusting!"

As the unfortunate tweets about the word "guerrilla" piled up, ESPN panicked. And when it was learned that one of the clueless tweets was a New York Times freelancer, Adler was toast (not breakfast toast, but . . . never mind).

ESPN threatened to fire Adler unless he apologized for something he didn't do, and when he did apologize, the network fired him anyway. Didn't he make a racist comment?

Uhm, no. He was using a homonym (and no, I am not attacking gay people). Homonyms are words that sound alike but have different meanings. A spouse on the phone describing the dinner his or her partner cooked as "It was fowl" might want to phrase it another way to avoid having a dish thrown at him or her.

What is foul is that Adler's life for two years has been a nightmare.

Adler sued ESPN for wrongful termination on Feb. 14, 2017. Last week, ESPN finally settled the lawsuit and rehired Adler. But in the interim, the stress and abuse he experienced took their toll. According to tennis.life, he suffered emotional and physical issues, including a heart attack.

In his book "The Death of Expertise," national security expert Tom Nichols says we have become "proud of not knowing things. Americans have

reached a point where ignorance . . . is [considered] an actual virtue." It wasn't for Adler.

Meanwhile, ESPN executives tried to keep the settlement with Adler low key. Maybe ESPN was embarrassed.

Or maybe executives at ESPN know that the truth doesn't matter anymore?



Follow playwright Mike Vogel at @mikewrite7.