

EDITORIALS

Don't let up in opioid fight

Deaths from opioid overdoses finally might be declining on Long Island. That's a dose of good news to mix with the ugly fact that officials say as many as 600 people died from opioid overdoses on Long Island in 2017, and the reality in 2018 will still feature far too many of our friends and loved ones being devastated by drugs.

Both the Suffolk and Nassau county police departments have released preliminary 2018 figures that suggest Long Island might have turned a corner. In Suffolk, both opioid overdoses and deaths from them are down about by about a third through May compared with the same period last year. Overdoses have declined from six a day to 3.6 a day, and fatal overdoses have declined from one every 24 hours to one every 36. If the trend continues, total fatalities from opioid overdoses could move down to 2015 levels in Suffolk; while that's good, remember 2015 represented double the OD rates of 2010.

In Nassau, officials say fatal heroin overdoses have declined by 11 percent, year to date, and total heroin overdoses are down 24 percent.

Exactly why the numbers are declining is hard to say. Advocates point to awareness, prevention and treatment, while police point to law enforcement crackdowns. But experts say drug epidemics die out eventually, if only because the bulk of the people susceptible to a dangerous substance have died, gotten sober or avoided the pitfall.

What is needed has not changed: Kids and adults alike need to have the dangers of opioids reinforced repeatedly, those who fall into the addiction trap need help, and police need to keep maximum pressure on the vultures profiting from deadly drugs like fentanyl and heroin.

There is hope, we now see. That is all the more reason to keep fighting this fight. — *The editorial board*

Don't let partisan fights undermine voter rights

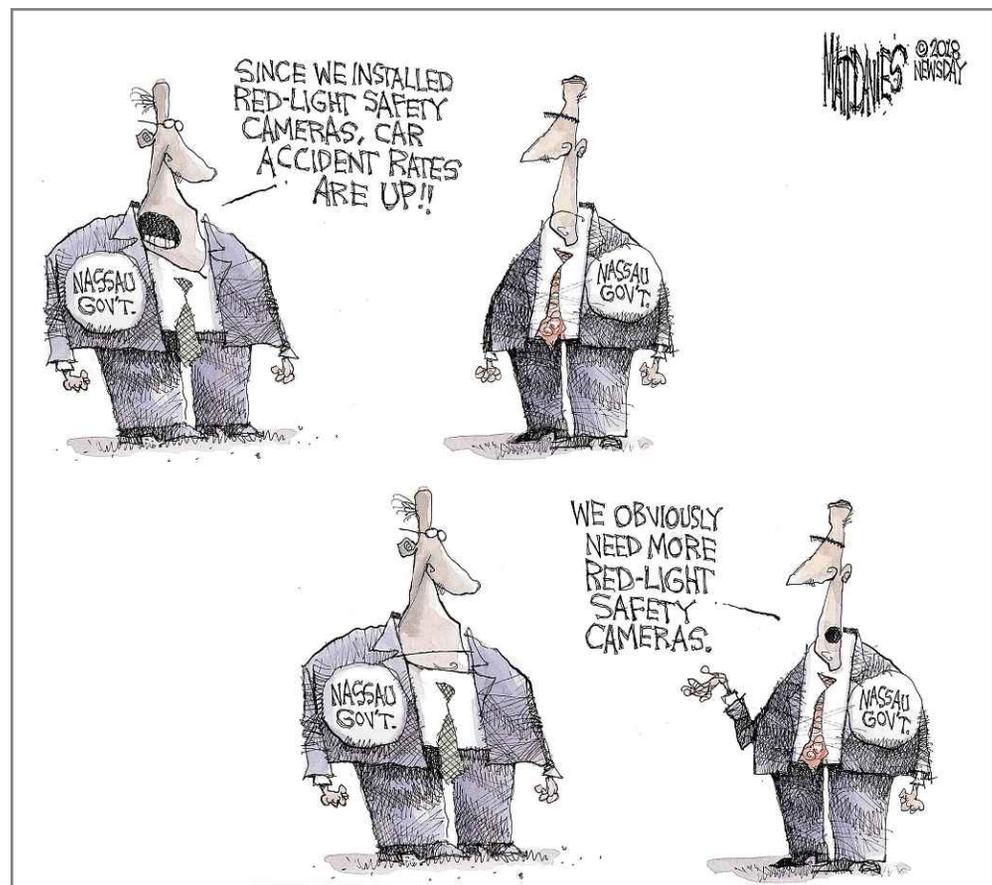
The Supreme Court decided an Ohio voting case on Monday that ordinarily would be ignored as a turgid parsing of two federal laws. But in the political wars to shape the nation's future, it's another battle.

In a 5-4 ruling along ideological lines, the justices upheld the Republican-controlled state's process to purge its electoral rolls of inactive voters, the most aggressive in the nation. It's a practice Democrats contend is motivated by a desire to disenfranchise minority, elderly and poor voters. The attorneys general of 15 states, all Republicans, filed briefs in support of Ohio's actions. New York filed a brief against Ohio's that was joined by 11 attorneys general who are Democrats. During the Obama administration, the Justice Department opposed the state, but it switched sides in the Trump administration.

In the case, Larry Harmon, a software engineer, wanted to vote against a 2015 Ohio ballot initiative to legalize marijuana, but found his name missing from the rolls. Harmon had last voted in 2008, but he missed two federal elections and did not contact the local board of elections in six years, so his name was purged. Harmon said he never got a notice. While a 1993 federal law prohibits the removal of voters solely because of a failure to vote in a federal election, a 2002 law requires states to remove those who failed to vote in two successive federal elections, but not if the only reason is failing to vote. It's in this ambiguity that states have wide latitude to keep their voter rolls up to date.

Accurate rolls are ideal, but the zeal to purge voters based on the unfounded premise that there is rampant voter fraud is wrong. In this partisan fight, citizens are disenfranchised from their most basic of rights, casualties of the raging partisanship undermining belief in government. — *The editorial board*

MATT DAVIES



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LETTERS

After 50 years, a regret about RFK

On March 31, 1968, my brother and I were flying to New York after his graduation from pilot training at an Arizona Air Force base. We were both roused from our sleep by a distinct Boston accent. In front of us, a tanned middle-aged man with thick brown hair was shaking hands with an admirer.

As the man proceeded to the back of the plane, a passenger confirmed that it was Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. We knew he had also been in Phoenix, as he campaigned there for president that weekend. In person, he was handsomer and taller than media depictions. Nineteen and inclined to Republicanism, I chose not to offer my hand.

Assuming he would exit quickly upon landing, we were surprised as we squeezed past the candidate

trapped in his seat by frenetic reporters. During the flight, President Lyndon Johnson had announced he would not seek re-election. Informing Kennedy, reporters sought his reaction. Nine weeks after the flight, Kennedy was assassinated ["Legacy of hope lingers," News, June 6].

Fifty years later, I still regret the pride of a 19-year-old.

Gregory P. Peddle,
Glen Head

Provide help to these desperate women

I was saddened to read "Glen Cove to fight residence" [News, May 31], about efforts to establish a home for women with eating disorders.

The reasons given — that the home would be out of character in a neighborhood of historic homes — made it sound as if the people there are afraid that the women in

the home would come out at night and haunt their privacy and their privileged neighborhood. Where has compassion gone?

People suffering from these illnesses are in desperate circumstances. The women need a peaceful place where kindnesses can stop them from starving themselves, and they can get back to situations in which they can thrive and believe in themselves.

I would be proud to have a home like that in my neighborhood and to perhaps engage, if possible, with the people who suffer in this way. I don't think people striving to recover from a life-threatening illness would bring down the neighborhood. Actually, allowing the home would be a sign of growth in understanding what many people are afflicted with.

Sylvia Essman,
Plainview