

States for 10 years, though he is in the process of applying for advance parole so he can return to care for his two daughters. Advance parole is granted to people who cannot obtain a visa and would be likely to allow Vokshi to remain in the United States for a year, Nanaj said.

His daughters, Cynthia, 14, and Britney, 12, who has autism, remain in the care of Vokshi's ex-wife.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents for the metropolitan area did not return a request for comment. The current administration has said that any immigrant in the country illegally is subject to deportation as a matter of public safety and law enforcement.

In Albania, Vokshi worked on a farm and lived in a one-bedroom house with his parents and five siblings. He left the country looking for a better life, going first to Italy and then living for a time in Germany.

In 1994 he moved to Elmont to live with a cousin, found work as a waiter in Carle Place and started calling himself Sal, which he figured was easier for his customers to pronounce.

He eventually got the job at Golden Reef diner, where he worked 10 hours a day, six days a week. In 2007, he bought a three-bedroom home in Elmont.

"I worked hard, but I loved the job," Vokshi said. "I loved being with the people. I loved telling them stories and learning their orders." Trahanas called Vokshi the best waiter he ever had. On any given day, the Golden Reef is filled with regulars who come for Sal.

Robert Lucks, 54, of Valley Stream, was there for lunch last Wednesday. During the past 15 years, Lucks has had hundreds of conversations with Sal, about their children and their lives on the South Shore.

"He's a real mensch," Lucks said. "He's a really good man, and also happens to be a very good waiter."

Laurin Levine, 63, of Ocean-side, sat nearby. It was one of the first times since Levine started coming to the diner 10 years ago that Sal wasn't there to greet her with an iced tea, plate of pickles and his warm smile.

"I was brought to tears," Levine said when she heard Vokshi was deported. "To take a hardworking man who owns a home, who contributed to society, who wanted a good life for his children and rip him from his family. I still feel sick thinking about it."

ATTORNEYS: DEFENSE IN KILLINGS WILL TAKE LONGER

BY ROBERT E. KESSLER
robert.kessler@newsday.com

Attorneys for reputed MS-13 gang leaders accused of killing two Brentwood High School girls said Monday it will take until the end of the year to draft legal arguments why the defendants should be spared the death penalty.

The two alleged leaders of the Brentwood Sailors clique, brothers Alexi Saenz, 23, and Jairo Saenz, 21, were arraigned Monday in Central Islip federal court in connection with three other killings.

One of Alexi Saenz's attorneys, David Ruhnke, of New Jersey, argued that given the new murder charges, it would take the defense even longer to prepare briefs arguing against the federal government's seeking the death penalty. He was joined in the argument by one of Jairo Saenz's attorneys, Kelley Sharkey, of Brooklyn.

Alexi Saenz, is the leader of the Brentwood clique and Jairo Saenz is the No. 2, Eastern District prosecutors say.

The two previously had been



MS-13 gang slaying victims' parents Freddy Cuevas, left, Evelyn Rodriquez and Elizabeth Alvarado leave court Monday.

accused in the Sept. 13, 2016, killings of Nisa Mickens, 15, and her friend, Kayla Cuevas, 16. Mickens had gotten into disputes with MS-13 members. As she walked with Cuevas, MS-13 members in the area seeking rival gang members to harm saw the friends, prosecutors said. Using bats and machetes, the attackers then killed Mickens and Cuevas, police said. The Saenz brothers had

pleaded not guilty to the killings.

Monday's hearing involved allegations the brothers took part in the 2016 murders of three people they believed were members of rival gangs. The pair are accused in the April 2016 killing of Oscar Acosta in Brentwood as well as the killings that October of Javier Castillo in Freeport, and Dewann Stacks in Brentwood, court papers said.

Both brothers pleaded not guilty to those killings Monday. U.S. District Judge Joseph Bianco ordered the brothers to continue being held without bail pending future hearings.

Seeking the death penalty at a federal trial is a complex procedure involving local and federal prosecutors who then pass their recommendations on to prosecutors at the Justice Department in Washington, D.C. Ultimately, the U.S. Attorney General makes the final decision.

Several other alleged MS-13 members were arraigned individually Monday on federal charges including murder, attempted murder, assault, drug dealing and arson. One of those suspected MS-13 members, Kevin Torres, 22, of Roosevelt, pleaded not guilty to involvement in the killing of Acosta.

Bianco set Oct. 5 as the next hearing date in the cases of the Saenz brothers, Torres and seven other alleged MS-13 gang members.

Attorneys for Torres and the other defendants who could be reached, declined to comment, as did federal prosecutors John Durham, Paul Scotti and Michael Keilty.

Suffolk plans to buy historic Coram house

BY CARL MACGOWAN
carl.macgowan@newsday.com

Suffolk County officials are working to finalize plans to acquire an abandoned Coram house that some residents believe is the hamlet's former post office.

Coram civic leaders hope to turn the Norton House on Middle Country Road into a museum if county officials can buy the deteriorating abode from its owner or seize it for nonpayment of more than \$80,000 in back taxes owed on the house and two adjacent commercial properties.

Legis. Sarah Anker (D-Mount Sinai) said last week county officials are working on plans to settle the tax dispute. She said the county and Brookhaven Town may jointly buy the property.

Maryanne Douglas, a Coram civic activist, said the property was abandoned about 30 years ago and is in "poor condition."

Civic groups would manage the property if the county can acquire it. "Once that's set, we feel that we can start hacking away at the debris around the house," said Douglas, president of the Davis Town Meeting House Society, which manages another historic property in Coram. "We would make it into a museum. . . . What we are trying to do is make that whole area of Coram a better place to live."

Civic leaders believe the house is about 200 years old and was once owned by Nathaniel Norton, a veteran of the French and Indian Wars. The home served as a post office around the turn of the last century, local leaders have said.

But decades of neglect have left the house in "a state of advanced decay," according to an engineer hired by Brookhaven Town officials to assess the property. The Brookhaven Town Board in March had ordered the house demolished if



Officials plan to turn the abandoned Norton House into a museum.

the home's fate was not resolved in three months.

Anker, in a June 5 letter to town officials, asked for additional time to resolve the tax dispute.

Town spokesman Jack Krieger said official action is not required to extend the deadline, which had been set to expire this month. The home's owner, listed in property records as Manhattan-based Cefalu Properties, is willing to pay the back taxes, Anker said.

Attempts to reach Cefalu Properties officials were unsuccessful.

Douglas said community groups hope to join the Nor-

ton House with other properties in Coram to create a historical district. Those other properties include a former school and the site where Continental Army troops led by Maj. Benjamin Tallmadge are believed to have burned a stack of hay stockpiled by British troops during the Revolutionary War.

Douglas said she could not estimate renovation costs, but hopes to use volunteer labor and donated materials. "I think it will be a great thing for the neighborhood, because we can put a little park around it," she said.