

26th Annual

Jericho High School Alumni Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony

*Presidential
Primaries Edition*

The annual JHS Alumni Hall of Fame induction ceremony and dinner are always a great time. But everyone was looking forward to this year's affair with even greater anticipation than usual, because it would provide—for a few hours, at least—an escape from the cage match that has been the 2016 U. S. presidential race, with all of its shouting, and insults, and speculation about the correlation between finger size and penis size.

But, alas, due to unforeseen circumstances, 'twas not to be.

Funny story ...





As it turned out, the Hall of Fame induction ceremony happened to fall on the Thursday before the New York State presidential primaries, which, for the first time in ages, actually mattered! New Yorkers woke up that morning wondering, “Have they changed the name of our state to Ohio or Florida, or something?”

All five candidates still in the running were casing the area for votes: Nassau County, Suffolk County, Brooklyn, Manhattan—we were literally surrounded!

For the Democrats, Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders squared off at the Brooklyn Navy Yards for a clash-of-the-titans-style slugfest.

Meanwhile, Ted Cruz held forth at a GOP fund-raiser in Manhattan, which the Texas Senator jokingly calls “Sodom and Gemmorah.” (What’s that? He wasn’t joking? Cruz is so painfully humorless that he wouldn’t know a joke even if it crossed the road to find him? Sounds about right.)

Then there was Cruz’s archnemesis, Donald Trump, who, with characteristic sensitivity, took his anti-immigrant platform to Patchogue, Long Island, the site of a horrific 2008 hate crime in which an Ecuadorean immigrant was stabbed to death on the street; or, as The Donald referred to the tragedy wistfully, “Good times!”

Lastly, almost as an afterthought (no, actually, *very much* as an afterthought), Ohio governor John Kasich was right next door to us—*right next door!*—holding a town hall meeting at the Milleridge Cottage.

The presidential ambitions of the five hopefuls were so intense that their presence in our area somehow brought forth the ghosts of Founding Fathers George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, who could be seen nursing drinks at the Milleridge Inn bar. Hailing from Jericho, you no doubt recall Washington’s historical association with the Inn: in 1778, when it was a mere 106 years old, General George stopped in to use the chamber pot and purchase some of the Milleridge’s famous gluten-free popovers before galloping off to defeat the Redcoats at Mid-Island Plaza, in the infamous “Battle at Sid’s Pants.”

Everyone at the induction ceremony, held in the Jericho Public Library auditorium, and at the dinner beforehand at Milleridge Inn, did their best to put politics out of their minds for the evening. Fortunately, it was one of the most memorable ceremonies in the Hall of Fame’s twenty-six years.



Inductee Billy Jay Stein ('88), posing with his mom, is a musician and the Grammy Award-winning producer and mixer of the 2015 Best Musical Theatre album for *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*. The family's musical lineage is impressive: Mom is a soprano who performs in regional theater and still sings at the Jericho Jewish Center; his father was an amateur classical pianist.

Uncle Mike Stein played Peter in the original cast of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. And Billy's cousin was the legendary Jule Styne, composer of Broadway musicals such as *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, *Funny Girl*, and *Gypsy*, and literally thousands of songs, including the classics "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend," "Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!," and "Everything's Coming Up Roses," to name but a few.



How's this for a coincidence? Billy's younger sister, Stephanie Balkin, an actress (pictured here with her mother and her husband, Sandy Balkin), who once lived in Israel and is now an executive with the Jewish National Fund, graduated Jericho High School in 1991. That year, the senior standout was picked as one of the student presenters for the very first JHS Alumni Hall of Fame induction ceremony.



This was an especially sweet reunion: here's Billy with his former music teacher at JHS, Mr. Kenneth Pollitt, whom he credits as a major influence and mentor. Earlier that day, Mr. Pollitt had been at the hospital, and his doctors wanted to admit him overnight for observation. No way! he said. He had someplace important to be—namely, here,



Billy and his wife, Laura Miles, live with their two children in Manhattan.



The class of 1982's Dr. Robert Pappalardo (right) with two of the folks who nominated him for the Hall of Fame: (left) classmate Sarah Glickman Greenstein and Robert's brother, Jack Pappalardo. (center). Robert is the project scientist for NASA's mission to Europa, one of Jupiter's moons, at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. The project got green-lighted last year, and although it is an unmanned mission, if you're interested in going, we're pretty sure that if you wrote to Robert and told him you're a proud Jayhawk, he'd be more than happy to squeeze you onboard.—at the very least, as a stowaway. He lives in Venice, California.



Sarah Glickman Greenstein and her husband, Steven, had to travel only from Merrick, Long Island, to support her friend Robert.

(Below) Brother Jack is the longtime president of the Art District in Denver, Colorado, where he and his wife, French-born artist Georgia Amar, own an art gallery.



Meanwhile, in Brooklyn, Hillary Clinton wasn't 'feeling the Bern' so much as feeling burned by the senator from Vermont. The scathing back-and-forth insults of the past few weeks had left both Democratic candidates hot under the collar.

First Senator Sanders made fun of Hillary's cankles, to which she snarled, "Ah, shuddap, ya Commie Grumpy Magoo!" The seventy-four-year old unwisely lived up to the nickname by nagging, "Madame Secretary, I have it—on good authority—that when you were the first lady, you used to regularly leave lightbulbs burning in the White House, even after you'd left the room! Do you think that electricity grows on trees, young lady?! As someone who stood shoulder to shoulder with Thomas Edison, let me assure you, it most certainly *does not*!"

And their exchanges were like freakin' Valentine's Day cards compared with the other party!





The Big Cheese says “Cheese!” Mr. Bob Hoffman founded the JHS Alumni Hall of Fame in 1990 and is still the main man. Joan Baiman Rosenberg (71) is a big cheese herself: principal of Jericho High. She is also the only person in the history of humankind (you can look it up) to be (a) a JHS graduate, (b) the parent of JHS grads, (c) inducted into the JHS Hall of Fame, (d) a member of the Selection Committee, (e) principal of JHS (and before that, a guidance counselor.)



Three class of '78 grads, all in the same place at the same time. Janet Hopf Kesner (right), who still lives in West Birchwood, is on the Hall of Fame Selection Committee. Lori Greene (left), an executive producer at BBCAmerica.com and vice president of New York Women in Cable Telecommunications, was inducted in 2010. Their friend Rhonda Folk Moll drove down from Westchester, where she's a neighbor of Gail Spiegel Cohen from the JHS class of 1972. As we often say, you can't get away from Jericho peoploids—they're everywhere!



From left to right, high school administrator John Mankowich; Meredith Hynes, JHS teacher and also co-emcee of the induction ceremony; Joan Baiman Rosenberg; and administrator Brian Cummings, who doubles as a member of the Hall of Fame Selection Committee.



(Above) high school teacher and HoF committee member Nick Maraventano; Joseph Lorintz, vice president of the Board of Education; and longtime teacher Mary Bensen.



(Left) Nick Maraventano bookended by two more members of the Hall of Fame Selection Committee: Mary Vitale (l.) and (r.) teacher Mary Moran. Nick, incidentally, emceed the induction ceremonies for many years.





This year's Jericho High School Alumni Hall Fame inductees, bringing the total to 135: Dr. Robert Pappalardo ('82), Robert Winston ('69), Billy Jay Stein ('88), Teresa Murray Amato, M.D. ('84), and Eric Shaw ('91). Robert, Michael, and Eric all flew in from California.

As you can see from this wholly undoctored photograph, while stumbling off to the men's room, we spotted the ghosts of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson drinking at a table in a dark corner of the restaurant. With all the politicking going on around us, you'd have thought they might be discussing the future occupant of the White House. But, no, as we plainly overheard, they were more concerned with events on the Great White Way:

T.J.: "Can you *believe* it? That scamp Alexander Hamilton has a play about him on Broadway! Sixteen Tony nominations, no less! And the mule-brained Ratsbane was never even president! Why not *us*?"

G.W.: "Tell me about it. *I'm* the Father of Our Country! What'd Hamilton ever do besides get shot full of holes by that ponce Aaron Burr, who couldn't hit Chris Christie's whale-sized arse with a cannonball at six paces?!"

T.J.: "Who's 'Chris Christie'?"

G.W.: "Since February, no one important. Anyway, in your case, Thomas, I think we both know what the problem is ..."

T.J.: "Yeah, yeah, I know, I know. That slave-owning business, right? The affair with Sally Hemings, yada yada. Tell me something I don't know. As you for, George, you never worked to build your brand, sir. You come across as too dour and humorless. All the focus groups said so! And for God's sake, man, why are you *still* galloping around with those wooden teeth? I could hook you up with an awesome dentist in the city who could fit you with a nice set of veneers!"

G.W.: "Never mind that! Any idea how Martha and I can score some decent tickets to *Hamilton* without it costing us our most splendid milking cow and a parcel of land?"

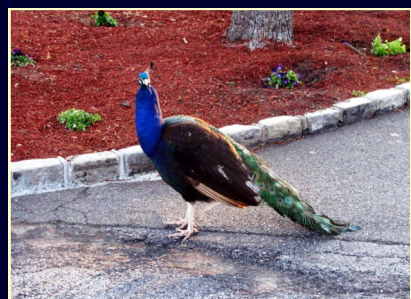




Dr. Teresa Murray Amato (second from right) poses with five of her six children: alphabetically, Caroline, Grace, Mary Kate, Megan, and Taylor. Missing in action was her son, who's off at college. Teresa was a registered nurse for years before deciding—in her thirties!—to go to medical school to become a doctor. Today she is assistant program director of emergency medicine and an attending physician in the Emergency Department of North Shore Hospital.



Shown here with Teresa are her mom, Carol Murray, and her sister, Christina Murray Trizano, also a Jericho grad.



While walking from the Milleridge Inn to the library—cutting through the same hole in the chain-link fence on Merry Lane that has been there since the Bronze Age—we passed by the Cottage, where a few stragglers were exiting the John Kasich town hall meeting. Didn't notice any "people," but, as you can see, chickens, pheasants, and peacocks were in abundance. When asked their opinions about the Ohio governor's policies and vision for America, they clucked a terse "No comment!" And their fowl mood darkened further when asked how they liked the snacks served by the Kasich campaign. "Chicken feed!" spat one angry rooster. He looked like he might peck us, so we hurried off to the library.

While guests filed into the library auditorium, they were serenaded by Noteworthy, the Jericho High School A Capella Singers, who were fantastic. By the way, this isn't an "official" school musical program; the kids formed the group themselves out of a love for singing. Interesting how a capella groups have become the hip thing on college campuses. Guess we can expect to see the return of barbershop quartets in the not-too-distant future.



Jim Greco ('73), a 2012 inductee, came back with his big sister, Rachelle ('69) to accept a special award.





And on with the show. This year, Meredith Hynes cohosted with math teacher Matt DeMarinis, and from the start, they struck up a natural, easy rapport. Over its history, the Hall of Fame masters of ceremonies have been Mr. Robert Perna, Ms. Barbara Murphy, Nicholas Maraventano, and, last year, the two-some of Brian Cummings and Meredith.



But first, opening remarks from Mr. Hank Grishman, the district superintendent. As you can see, all inductees must suffer the humiliation of sitting directly under gynomous blowups of their high school yearbook photos. For that alone, they deserve inclusion.



Each inductee is introduced by a current JHS Senior with an interest in the same profession. All of these kids are super accomplished, typically batting away Ivy League schools and amassing all kinds of awards.

To top it off, they all seem really nice, unassuming, polite, respectful, and grounded.

In short, it's enough to make you *sick*.

Eric Shaw was introduced by presenter Edward Tan.



Eric, from the class of 1991, is an Emmy Award-winning writer for some of today's biggest stars, including Spone-Bob SquarePants. As you might guess, he has a great sense of humor, hinting at the immense fortunes commanded by cartoon voice actors and admitting to having once dated the actress who voices Sandy the Squirrel. He earned his Outstanding Writing in Animation Emmy in 2013 for his work on the PBS hit *WordGirl*.

Inductees often use their time in front of the microphone to thank faculty members who made a difference in their lives. In Eric's case, he gave a big shout-out to one of his JHS coaches, Mr. Fred Grasso.

Eric was very much at ease speaking to the students in the audience, as he regularly speaks at universities in order to help those just starting out learn what he calls the "art form that is creative writing."





The class of 1969's Michael Winston, introduced by senior Amanda Orbuch (at left) receives his plaque from Superintendent Hank Grishman. His acceptance speech was, in a word, intense.



Michael had spent a successful career as a top executive at five Fortune 50 companies. And when he landed at Countrywide Financial in his late fifties, he assumed it would probably be his last stop in the business world. He was right, but not for the reasons he assumed

Soon after arriving, Michael discovered that the company was engaged in ultrarisky—as well as illegal—lending practices on a massive scale. Appalled by what he'd found, he alerted upper management, only to realize that not only were they aware of how Countrywide was conducting business but also condoned the corruption.

Michael turned down *a lot* of money—a bribe, essentially, not to report the misconduct to the proper authorities. But his conscience wouldn't let him look the other way. As he reflected, movingly, he kept coming back to something his late father had told him about the importance in life of always doing the right things, even when nobody else does. Thanks to his whistleblowing, Countrywide imploded as part of the Great Recession of 2008–09, which almost sent the economy over a cliff. Michael lost his job, and became a pariah in the industry, and his marriage fell apart too. What he didn't lose, however, was his self-respect and his soul. He has since cofounded an organization called Bank Whistleblowers United and speaks frequently around the country.

Michael also spoke touchingly about his late brother Bob Winston, from the class of 1972, who, sadly, died of cancer at just thirty years of age. "He was my best friend," he said. In the audience was one of Bob's closest friends, from Jericho, Bill Pastarnack (71).



Retired math teacher Carol Spielberger of the Jericho Retiree Association called Jim Greco onstage to receive the JRA's annual award in memory of the late social studies teacher Mr. Emil Voigt. Jim, a retired corrections officer, is president of Long Island K-9, the largest K-9 training facility on Long Island.



Student Benjamin Wachtel delivers his introduction under the watchful eye of a teenage Dr. Teresa Murray Amato.

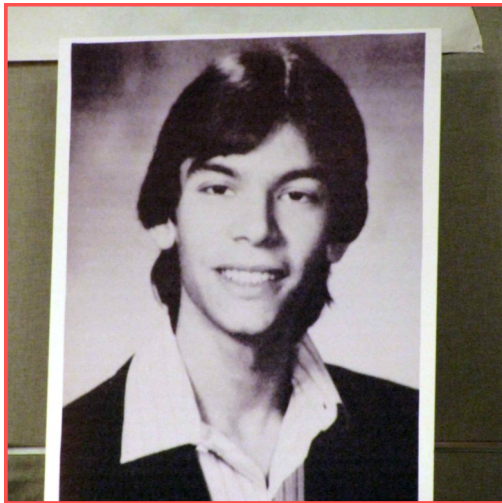
Her speech was especially poignant; Teresa basically told us about herself through thanking the many people who have supported her throughout her life. Most of them were sitting in the front row: her high school friend Paula Finkelstein Rosenthal ('84); her mother; her sister, Christina; her five daughters; and her husband, Tony Amato. She moved about the stage as she spoke, often crying and laughing at the same time.



By all accounts, Ted Cruz's speech at a Republican fund-raising dinner in Manhattan was an unmitigated disaster, with his voice barely audible over the clatter of GOP high rollers smashing their plates

against the wall to make sure that no leftovers remained for some bleeding-heart-liberal go-gooder feed-the-homeless organization to take to the takers.

Most New Yorkers, though, couldn't be bothered to give Senator Cruz the time of day, because they were too busy exercising their sinful "New York values" —breaking not only every single one of the Ten Commandments but even some little-known commandments that didn't make God's final cut. Hey, you know how competitive we New Yorkers can be!



Dr. Robert Pappalardo (shown in his 1982 yearbook photo), was presented by Jessica Huang. He brought with him the first copy of *Astronomy* magazine he ever read and spoke fondly of teacher Ray Matienzo, who now lives in Sarasota, Florida.





Billy Jay Stein ('88), introduced by Vanessa Eng, an aspiring performer herself, led the JHS jazz ensemble, which toured Europe and California. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a degree in neuroscience and planned to go on to medical school. But then his college band, the Mad Hatters, inked a record deal with Atlantic Records, and he faced a major career/life decision. One of the people he called for advice was his former JHS music teacher, Mr. Ken Pollitt. Billy chose music. Mad Hatter recorded three CDs in the 1990s and toured with everyone from the Allman Brothers, to Sheryl Crow, to the Dave Matthews Band. In addition to performing in the pit orchestra for many Broadway shows, he has accompanied the celebrated singer Linda Eder for the last two decades. In fact, the day after the Hall of Fame ceremony, Billy was off to catch a flight to Indiana for a gig with Ms. Eder.

Then it was into the reception area for ... cookies! Not as many retired teachers turned out this year as in years past—word on the street was that there was a fierce game of dominoes going on in the former Floyd Bennett parking lot, and, well, you know how that goes. But among those in attendance were (left) Mr. Bob Hoffman and Mrs. Dolores Hoffman, who recently celebrated their forty-fifth anniversary; (center) Ms. Maureen Tracy with the class of 1973's Randye Ringler; and (right), in a great photo, marrieds Mrs. Nancy Lynch and Mr. Austin Lynch.



Michael Winston (second from left) with his daughter Chelsea and her husband, Andrew Lamberti, on the right. In between them is artist Georgia Amar, and at left, Michael's classmate Ken McLaughlin ('69), who happened to be in town from his home in California that week to celebrate his mother's ninetieth birthday. (Happy b'day, Mrs. M!) Ken, an Emmy-nominated editor and writer for the *San Jose Mercury News*, is also a member of the Hall of Fame, inducted last year (on Mom's eighty-ninth birthday). His parents still live in Oakwood. Michael and Ken, who played in a rock band together in high school, hadn't seen each other in forty-seven years.





James Greco and his beautiful family: wife Nicole and their two daughters.



From the class of 1978, Elizabeth Marks with Mr. Bob Hoffman.



Teresa Murray Amato with her husband, Tony Amato.



Donald Trump brought his 2016 presidential tour to Patchogue and had the joint rocking with all of his biggest hits. The crowd roared its approval as he jammed on “Poor Poor Little Marco: Go Cry Yourself to Sleep,” “Hillary Be a Bee-atch!,” “Hatchet Face,” which he dedicated to “my good friend Carly Fiorina,” and an anthemic “The Ballad of Lyin’ Ted” that had the entire audience waving its arms and holding up cigarette lighters.

Having exhausted his entire repertoire, for the encore, a tired but euphoric Trump took to insulting past presidents like Teddy Roosevelt: “Teddy

Roosevelt: big, tough guy, right? Said, ‘Speak softly but carry a big stick.’ Speak

softly? *Softly?! Speaking softly is for wusses, people! Let me tell you: as president, I will make America loud again! I never speak softly. I don’t cry. I have one just emotion: ‘Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! Gimme!’*

“And as for carrying a big stick, believe me, my stick is a lot bigger than Teddy Roosevelt’s ever was! Much bigger. No problem there, let me tell you. *No problem.*” Then he proceeded to lead the crowd in a chant of “Make America Great Again!” while thrusting out his fingers in what was either a “We’re No. 1!” sign or a victory sign. With such tiny whittle itty-bitty baby digits, it was impossible to tell from beyond the front row.



Philroy was here. When you’re the event photographer, it’s easy to forget to ask someone to snap your picture in order to document that you were actually there. Thanks to Mary Vitale for doing the honors.

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