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Dig those space suits

Patchogue-Medford Library staff display their enthusiasm for the upcoming Long Island Reads event featuring astronaut Mike Massimino and his book, "Spaceman," at the Patchogue Theatre for the Performing Arts. Pictured (left to right) are, back row: Kyle Koleda, Colleen Hutchens, Sharon Romano and Michele Cayea. In front: Laura Accardi, Danielle Paisley and Karen McCahey. See story and interview on p.6.

Adv/Leuzzi

Hockey arena proposed in Medford

BY RANDALL WASZYNSKI

Medford residents welcomed the proposition of an ECHL hockey arena, which would not require a change of zone, at the former proposed OTB site and old movie theater in Medford, 440 South Service Road, a \$130 million alternative project to the planned automobile wholesale operation requiring a zone change.

"If the property were to become available to us, this could be a real boon for the community," said Bernard Shereck, CEO of Arena Management of New York Inc., at the Medford Taxpayers and Civic Association meeting on March 28.

However, rezoning from split CR Commercial Recreation/A1 Residential to J5 Business through Brookhaven Town is currently being pursued by Plaza Auto

Mall Ltd., to operate an automobile wholesale operation on the vacant 31-acre property.

The hospitality company Delaware North purchased the property in a partnership with Suffolk Regional Off-Track Betting Corporation back in 2015 and still possesses ownership of the property. Shereck suggested that Delaware North may be willing to pursue the sports complex if Plaza Auto Mall does not receive approval on rezoning. OTB representatives did not respond for comment.

The Town of Brookhaven received and reviewed Plaza Auto Mall's application in August of last year and estimated that the project would take about three to six months to build and generate about 50 to 80 jobs, with approximately \$85,000 in tax revenue.

See **HOCKEY ARENA** on page 9

Bellport BJ's proposes gas station

BY TARA SMITH

Representatives from BJ's Wholesale Club presented their plans to construct a gas station at their Bellport location during a Greater Bellport Coalition meeting last week.

The proposal is to open a members-only gas station at the club consisting of six dispensers with 12 self-serve gasoline pumps, an overhang and 169-square-foot kiosk staffed with an attendant. Tim Shea, attorney for the applicant, said the kiosk would have an employee-only restroom not open to the public. Unlike other area gas stations, there would be no convenience store on-site.

The project would require a change of zone on a portion of the site, which is currently a commercially zoned property. According to town code, motor vehicle fueling stations as accessory uses to major retailers must apply for a special J Business 5 permit.

Though the proposal has been submitted to the town for review, Shea indicated that a hearing for the change of zone has not yet been scheduled.

According to Pat Smith, VP of real

estate at BJ's, the company operates over 100 gas stations nationwide. "When we build new clubs, we won't build them without a gas station, so what we're doing now is going back and putting gas stations in at clubs that don't have them," he said, adding that if an on-site gas station is not possible, developers will look to off-site, nearby locations. "We like to be pretty much still in sight of the club."

In Westbury, BJ's constructed a gas station off-site across the street from the wholesale club. An off-site gas station owned by BJ's recently received approval in Riverhead. He said that off-site gas stations are open to non-club members, but BJ's cardholders pay a lower price.

At the GBC meeting, resident Nancy Marr inquired about gas prices. "How do you save money? There are lots of other gas stations and you're competing with them," she said. According to Smith, gas, sourced from other companies' excess, is typically about 5 to 10 cents cheaper than other area gas stations. "We have to be [cheaper],

See **BJ'S GAS STATION** on page 5

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