The Thomas Cavanaugh Sr.,
Memorial Golf Tournament
The Blue Point-Bayport Lions Club
For the benefit of the Al Furchert Sr., Larry Schwirzbin
and Thomas Sr., and Mary Cavanaugh Scholarships
October 9, 2006
Time: 11:30am registration
The Rock Hill Country Club
Dinner after Golf • Prizes • Hole in One • 2006 Ford sponsored by McCarville Ford

Skills Unlimited, Inc.
7th Annual Golf Outing
September 19, 2006
Long Island National Golf Club
Riverhead, NY
567-3320

Oysterman's
October 2, 2006
Noon
Timber Point Country Club
589-7775

Bayport Civic Association
At the September Meeting of the Bayport
Civic Association, Bayport-Baypoint
Chamber of Commerce President Seth
Needelman was honored as their guest
speaker. He and BCA President Bob Draffin
promised a partnership of their organizations
and announced reciprocal memberships
between the two. Other issues discussed
included the upcoming Community Expo, the October 8th
South Shore Civic Alliance rally, and the October 24th "Meet the Candidates" night.

The next meeting of the BCA will be held on October
1965 at the Bayport Methodist Church @ 7pm. As always
we'll have a guest speaker, refreshments and a raffle. So
bring a neighbor or a friend and get involved!

Mandates....Ahhhhhh from page 1
Superintendent Annunziato said “The most federal funding our district has ever received was 16% of overall costs. If the spirit of the laws is right then the government should be paying its fair share”.

School construction and improvements have become another issue for contentious debate. Many local taxpayers have been shocked by the overall costs of improvements as well as the time it takes to complete them. Another mandate, the Wicks Law, controls construction and improvement projects over $50,000. This law, which dates back to 1912, requires school districts to award separate construction contracts for plumbing, heating, air/ventilating and electrical work. Jim March, School Board President, said, “Adhering to this law adds as much as 15% to the cost of school construction contracts and anywhere from an additional 12 months to 18 months to the time to complete the project. Our School board is committed to maintaining fiscal accountability and responsibility. A law like Wicks leaves us little choice in the way we conduct construction projects.” New York is the only state that still adheres to this law.

Other interesting education mandates include, Reporting, Fiscal audits and School Board over-sight training. School districts are required to submit 128 reports throughout the year. They range in nature from school violence to test results, finance to personnel related reports. School districts must also now pay for an independent fiscal auditor at a cost of $25,000 - $75,000 annually. Recent school budget scandals now necessitate school districts to ramp up internal audits at a cost of $30,000 - $40,000 annually as well. Jim March stated, “Board members must also take fiscal oversight training and, interestingly, they are the only elected officials is the state required to do so. This can represent another cost of $500 per board member”.

Lastly, Teachers Contracts. While laws have been enacted that prohibit openly discussing negotiations, I was able to speak to all parties involved as to their stand in the process. Bayport - Blue Point Teachers Association President, Marcia Meirowitz said, “We are hoping to come to a quick resolution. The teachers contract expired in June”. She also added, “Teachers in the Bayport-Baypoint School district are proud of their accomplishments and the overall test scores of our students.” School Board President Jim March stated, “We respect and highly regard our teaching staff and hope to keep an open dialogue with the teachers union. Our goal is to resolve the contract as quickly as possible as well as avoid any unnecessary controversy”.

As of press time the contract had not been settled. Typically a contract can take up to two years to be resolved, although that has never happened in Bayport – Blue Point. In the meantime the Taylor law protects the union employees by ensuring that teachers still get all benefits and pay increases as stated in their most recent contract. The most senior teachers do not get step or column increases until the contract is resolved. Research into the Taylor Law from the New York State Governer’s Office of Employee relations stated, in part, the process of contract negotiations follows four steps: 1) Mediation 2) Fact Finding 3) Binding Arbitration, 4)Legislative Hearing. Binding Arbitration and Legislative Hearings do not affect the contract process for teachers. The Taylor Law was established to protect public employees and affords them the right to unionize, requires employers to negotiate and enter into agreements with employees term and conditions of employment; establishes impasse procedures in collective bargaining disputes; defines and prohibits improper practices by public employee’s and public employee organizations; prohibits strikes by public employee’s; and establishes a state agency to administer the law.

A few more facts to ponder from the New York State School Board Association News –
• New York State pays a smaller share of education costs than most states, so the strain on property tax is greater.
• New York State has the highest percentage of instructional spending in the nation.
• School Boards must find funding for each new educational mandate, while protecting the rights of the students and acting fiscally responsible to its constituents, the taxpayer.

The next step is collectively finding ways to address the mounting costs of a quality education. Since the guidelines, regulations, and mandates are coming from the State and Federal Government it might be time to look to those elected officials to find ways to reduce our taxes, pay their fair share of mandates, and lift some of the requirements that are adversely affecting the funding needed to run our schools.