

STEPPING OUT

Where to go, what to do, who to see

Senior Idol hopefuls set to rock Long Island Popular competition for over-50s to showcase their talents

Get ready, Long Island! Twenty talented senior citizens are going to rock 'n roll, sing, dance and more across the Huntington High School auditorium stage in the latest edition of NYS 50+ Senior Idol.

These dynamic performers, all age 50 and over, intend to bring the house down with their unique and standing ovation-worthy performances as they compete for the title of 2017 Senior Idol on Nov. 12 at 2:30 p.m. A first prize award of \$1,000 will be presented to the winner.

First held in 2005, and for the next four consecutive years, the contest continues to attract an array of long-hidden and dormant talent among the older crowd.

"We got some calls through the years asking about Senior Idol," says the event's co-producer Frank Trotta, the publisher of 50 Plus Lifestyles magazine for the last 25-or-so years. "So we decided to bring it back." Trotta is also the former mayor of Bellport, and was also the director of the Suffolk County Office for the Aging. He is co-producing the show with Ms. NY Senior America State Administrator Marleen Schuss.

During the tryouts, held during the last few months at the Massapequa Public Library's Bar Harbor branch, the place resounded with the vocal stylings of Perry Como, Bon Jovi, a dead-ringer for Tina Turner, and a sprinkling of Broadway tunes, just to name a few of the acts. The preliminary judges had the task of narrowing down the 100-or-so hopefuls to a lucky and talented group. A different set of four judges will decide the winner.

"What I liked best was not only listening to the magnificent talent that surrounded us, but hearing the experience and background that each of the contestants brought with them," Trotta said while watching the final audition last month. "The applicants ranged from retirees, to homemakers, to teachers, to



Photos courtesy Mary Malloy

Dolores (DJ) Brown rocked the auditions with her lively Tina Turner number.

attorneys and more. I think it makes perfect sense for them to share their talents and their own personal stories."

Trotta likens the upcoming competition to the variety shows that were popular on television years ago. "Now, there are just reality shows. Senior Idol is a real family show. It's a great opportunity for everyone, young and old, to come and see what these people can do."

Channeling Mark Twain and Tina Turner

Rob Alvey, 65, of Garden City, was chosen as one of the contestants, and he has a unique act: he brings Mark Twain to



life in a comedy-parody soliloquy tribute to the author-humorist.

"My wife suggested I enter the contest doing this ... and it was on my bucket list," says Alvey, who by day is a senior scientist and geologist with the United States Environmental Protection Agency, in the Superfund division, and is, he added, "the one person on Long Island who helps keeps your drinking water safe."

Alvey, who just had open heart surgery last month, will be retiring in about a year. He has almost two decades of experience on the stage, having acted in community theater with one of his three daughters. "I'm really not an actor or a singer or a

dancer," he says. "I really love original comedy. About 10 years ago, my middle daughter was taking photos for a college assignment, and after some other costumes, we ended up with the Mark Twain character. I looked like him, and I thought 'I could do something with this.'"

He says his act is "kind of like creating what Mark Twain (who died in 1910) would be like if he was alive in the 21st century. So, we'll see what happens. It was fun to see so many people trying out [at the auditions] and that they appreciated my act."

Dolores (DJ) Brown, 74, has been dancing for as long as she can remember. She was selected as 2nd Runner Up in the 2010 Ms. NY Senior America pageant — and hasn't looked back since. "Age is just a number," she says. "And I believe in giving back. It's what you do with your life that's important."

Brown who works in retail, volunteers at a convent in Amityville, teaching the nuns and senior citizens how to salsa dance in her spare time. "They love it!" she says. She plans to rock the auditorium with her energetic Tina Turner-style act. "I'm very excited and humbled to be chosen to be in the Senior Idol contest."

"As New York State Administrator of NY Senior America for the past 15 years, I feel so privileged to have the opportunity to meet New York's most talented performers," Schuss says. "The entire experience has been exhilarating as well as entertaining. I do hope you will grab your hat and your friends and come see for yourselves the variety of talents of these top-notch performers."

The other contestants include Mike Cuomo, Hicksville; Celeste Belletti, Bronx; Dolores Brown, Wyandanch; Ernest Cannava, Blue Point; James DiNapoli, Merrick; Larry Dubin, East Meadow; Darie Ehrlich, Babylon; Sean Farrell, Wantagh; Jerrold Fuller, Brentwood; Teri George, Medford; Richard Lanna, Dix Hills; Laura Lorenzo, Mastic Beach; Mary Malloy, East Rockaway; Pamela Merrill, Laurelton; Henry Simpkins, Elmont; Tony Tufariello, Copiague; Joan Tyler, Bayside; Theresa Walton, East Norwich; Kathy Bondhus, Rockaway Park.

— Mary Malloy
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EXPLORING NATURE Owl Prowl

Get up close and personal with some mysterious creatures of the night during a stroll through Sands Point Preserve. It's an opportunity to hear the preserve's wild owls calling in the woods. First learn to identify owls by sight and sound, and how to attract these beneficial birds to your own backyard. Then head out for a quiet guided night walk in search of owls and other nighttime wildlife using a safe, and easy method. Ranger Eric will teach participants how to develop your own night vision — flashlights are not needed. Friday, Nov. 10, 7-9 p.m. \$20 per car. Adults only. Sands Point Preserve, 127 Middle Neck Rd., Sands Point. (516)



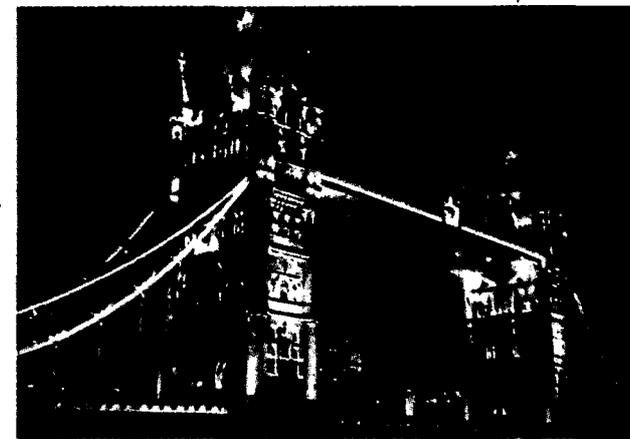
WEEKEND

Out and About

571-7901 or www.sandspointpreserveconservancy.org.

ON STAGE Music of the Knights

Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, Sir Elton John and Sir Paul McCartney have much in common: they are all British-born, they all have an Academy Award, they all have multiple Grammy Awards and they are all knights. They also happen to be three of the most successful songwriters of all time with careers that span decades. Their catalogue of hits comes alive in this dynamic musical revue performed by Broadway and pop vocalists. The concert honors their lasting musical influence with songs like "Memory," "I Don't Know How to Love Him," "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina," "The Phantom of the Opera," "Circle of Life," "Can You Feel the Love Tonight," "Your Song," "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me," "Yesterday," "Hey Jude" and many more.



Saturday, Nov. 11, 7:30 p.m. \$57. Tilles Center for the Performing Arts, LIU Post, 720 Northern Blvd., Brookville. (800) 745-3000 or (516) 299-3100 or www.ticketmaster.com or www.tillescenter.org.