

## Art Exhibit: Painting for Peace

• **MARY WILHELM**

The Third Annual Student Art Show, "Painting for Peace," sponsored by Operation Democracy, and featured art work from the talented Locust Valley High School students, was held this past weekend. The newly re-kindled Operation Democracy seeks to carry on the legacy from the original Operation Democracy (formed in 1947), from a humanitarian, non-partisan perspective through culture, education, children and the community of the hamlet of Locust Valley and the surrounding areas. Kaye Weninger, who revived this charity six years ago, was trying to figure out a way to get the children involved with the veterans and soldiers in Locust Valley. One

of the main projects for fundraising for Operation Democracy, back when it was founded in 1947, was a painting show. "Painting for Peace" was one way of bringing Operation Democracy and the charity back into the community. This event brings the students and the veterans together, so that we, as a community, don't lose sight of the fact that these brave veterans and soldiers fought for our country's freedom.

From its inception three years ago, Tom Camilleri, art teacher at the high school, has worked with Kaye, and Tom Hogan, principal of the Locust Valley Middle School, was instrumental in getting Kaye initial access into the school. Kaye said that, "Mr. Hogan knew how active I was in the community and he really believed in me and this project." She goes on to say, "I really focus on the veterans because I strongly feel that we shouldn't forget them. The children really need to be reminded of this history."



*Kaye Weninger, Tom Hogan, Melanie Mooney and Tom Camilleri - organizers*

Also in attendance was a young helicopter pilot, a veteran of the Iraqi war, who, also happens to be a painter. Kaye contacted him, since she really wanted him to see this event. He travelled all the way from New York City to see the show and was really enthused and impressed at the student's artwork. Also in attendance were several veterans, numerous community members and business owners. Christopher

Minafo's charcoal art work, which was quite different than the other pieces being displayed, was on-hand to discuss his work. Christopher focused on the effects of war from a hunger and poverty angle, which is an entirely different kind of war.

Thank you to Kaye Weninger, for organizing this event and her tireless work with the veterans and to the art teachers and administrators at the Locust Valley High School. A huge thank you and congratulations to the students, who understand the importance and value in creating these amazing art pieces, and especially those veterans who were there to support these talented students.



*High school senior Christopher Minafo*



*High School student and artist Marisa Chafetz*



*Veterans appreciate the artwork*

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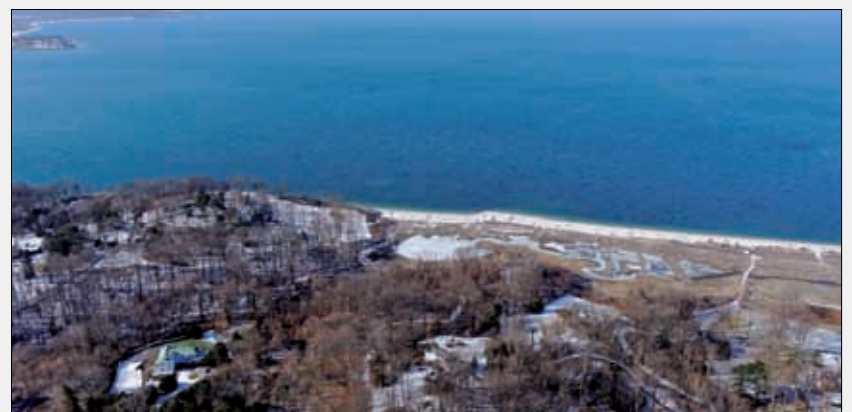


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