

December 2016



It's Awards Season!



The USTA Long Island Region is proud to

honor the best in tennis play, volunteerism and leadership at our 2017 Annual Awards Dinner in the spring. Nominations will be open soon and are due by 2/10/17. Visit our web site for further information.

Coming Soon

1/7 Powershares Series Legends @Barclay's Center

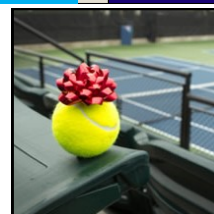
1/27-29 USTA Eastern Annual Conference @Renaissance Hotel, White Plains

3/6 BNP Paribas Open @MSG

3/13 Boys HS tennis season starts

visit
www.longisland.usta.com for
 details on all LI
 events

On The Ball: News From LI



Film Premiere Features Locals

Five members of a Long Island National-Champion senior USTA League team were in the audience at the recent Gold Coast International Film Festival premiere of GOLD BALLS. This quirky and charming feature-length documentary offers unique insight into the lives of elite tennis athletes, all of whom are over age 80.

Team captains Leslie Weckslers and Pat Molloy participated in a Q&A following the movie's presentation at the Bow Tie Cinemas in Manhasset. The women – who lead a team of 65-and-over national champs – were asked to give their perspective on the film's themes, including being a successful senior tennis player.

The movie presentation was sponsored by the USTA Long Island Region.

The Molloy & Weckslers team, which plays out of Sportime Lynbrook, is the current USTA Eastern Section champion and will head to Nationals again in May 2017 in Surprise, Ariz. Speaking about GOLD BALLS, Weckslers said, "We were amazed that these tennis players were still competing at singles (sometimes doubles) at the age of 80 and above! One of the players was 94!

"We enjoyed discussing the film with its many similari-

ties between the players showcased and the players on our team," she said. "All of us absolutely love the game of tennis and we set goals to be the best players we can be.

"Also, we have a desire to continually improve, and an understanding that our strategies and choice of shots evolve as we age and as we continue to learn new strokes. In addition, we realize the importance of taking care of ourselves by staying

and satisfying about playing tennis as a senior," Weckslers said.

"The USTA Long Island Region was proud to sponsor the Gold Coast International Film Festival's presentation of GOLD BALLS, which showcases one of our key messages: that tennis is a sport for a lifetime," said Michael Pavlides, USTA Long Island Region President. "Tennis can be played and enjoyed by everyone from the smallest children to the very elderly, as shown in the film. We were happy that Pat and Leslie and their teammates could bring their perspective to the film's audience."



Weckslers & Molloy team

fit and by using cross-training techniques to reduce injuries related to repetition and age," she said.

"Our team is fortunate because we have the support of each other as teammates and friends. We also enjoy the camaraderie and respect that develop between our opponents and our team. Although we want to win, sometimes, we are just happy to be playing competitive tennis. There is something very special



USTA LI Volunteers

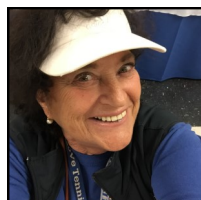
LI Region to Welcome Officers, Seeks New Volunteers

The USTA Long Island Region will welcome a new slate of Executive Board Officers going into 2017. The new volunteer officers will be formally installed at the USTA Eastern Annual Meeting in January.



Jonathan Klee, an attorney and avid tennis player who has volunteered with the USTA and USTA Long Island for many years. He previously was League Liaison-League Appeals & Inquiries.

Sunny Fishkind, a 30-year LI Region volunteer who currently serves as 2nd Vice President, Public Parks



Advocate and Facebook Manager, will become Vice President while also continuing in her parks and Facebook roles. A lifelong tennis player, Sunny teaches at Long Island University's CW Post campus and has run the Hofstra University Summer Tennis Camp for 30 years.

Craig Fligstein, who has held the positions of Secretary and Treasurer for the past six years, will continue to serve the Executive Board as Treasurer. Craig is Vice President, Grant Development & Strategic Program Initiatives, United Way of Long Island.



Terri Arnold-McKenzie, a former USTA executive in Diversity & Inclusion, joins the board as Secretary. An avid tennis player, she currently serves as Executive Director of Alliance Tennis Development, Inc.

help. Volunteers are needed to fill Regional Board positions and to help with many programs. Our volunteers assist in areas including: teaching youth tennis through a Community Tennis Association (CTA), National Junior Tennis & Learning (NJTL) program or at your neighborhood school or park; supporting adults with disabilities and US veterans; participating in community service projects such as collection of gently used tennis clothing and equipment; teaching tennis at neighborhood street fairs and festivals, and much more.

Calling All Volunteers

If you love Long Island AND love tennis, we'd LOVE to hear from you!

The USTA Long Island Region has so many great programs and activities that would benefit from your

If you would like to join the LI Regional Board or volunteer, please email us at ustaonlongisland@gmail.com by January 31, 2017 and we'll invite you to our next meeting.

Vets Get New Tennis Courts, Programming



In recognition of Veterans Day, the Northport VA Medical Center inaugurated its newly revamped tennis courts in November. The two courts were renovated thanks to a partnership between the USTA, USTA Eastern, USTA Long Island, United Way of Long Island and the Serve & Return Foundation. USTA grants allowed for resurfacing plus new lines, net posts, nets, fence fabric, wind screens and a wheelchair ramp and access gate. United Way of Long Island spearheaded the project.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony brought together representatives of each organization involved with the project as well as veterans from the Medical Center and children who attend the Wee Luv 'Em Day Care Center on the grounds. Tennis programming for U.S. veterans began earlier this year with free lessons provided at Bethpage Park Tennis Center. The Serve & Return Foundation will provide lessons for veterans at the new courts. "Over the course of a few years we will touch hundreds of service members, as well as their families and children, through tennis, helping them with their rehabilitation, both physical and emotional, and their community reintegration efforts," said Craig Fligstein, vice president, United Way of Long Island, and treasurer, USTA Long Island Region.



Eastern Section Awards Locals

The USTA Eastern Section will close out its year with the Annual Eastern Conference and Awards Ceremony in January.

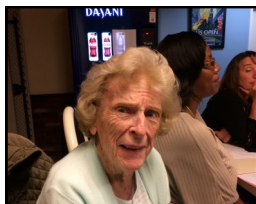
The Section will honor several Long Islanders with both Junior and Adult Awards.



Howie Arons

The **George Seewagen Award**, given to a USTA Eastern teaching professional who exemplifies excellence in competition, sportsmanship and love of the game, will be presented in memoriam to **Howie Arons**, who passed away recently. Arons, owner-operator of Great Neck Estates Tennis in Kings Point for 10 years, was a beloved tennis coach to both children and adults. He retired from a 36-year coaching career of the Cardozo Boys Tennis Team in Queens, with 582 career wins against only 51 defeats. His teams won 18 New York City Championships. Arons received the Vitas Gerulaitis for the Love of Tennis Award from the USTA Long Island Region in 2015.

Eileen Leonard will receive the **Umpire Service Award** in recognition of her many contributions to the field of tennis officiating. Leonard has officiated at countless junior and



Eileen Leonard

adult tournaments over the years and has volunteered at many Long Island and Eastern Section events. She currently is Administrator for the Long Island Compe-

and amateur events, her supportive attitude toward grass-roots programming, and being a positive role model.

Special Service Award-ee Craig Fligstein was instrumental in bringing revamped tennis courts and expanded tennis programming to veterans at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Northport (see story, page 2). In addition to



Craig Fligstein

vate the talent of low-income children to position them for college scholarships and volunteers with children in foster care. He also volunteers at the Northport VA Medical Center and the Milton Olive Middle School in Wyandanch.

Randi Wilkins, Regional Volunteer of the Year, Long Island, serves the Long Island Region Board as Suffolk County Community Development Chair. Her accomplishments include bringing tennis to children in Suffolk County and launching the USTA Long Island Region Kids' Day in Suffolk in 2015. That event, which was successful in its first year despite a major storm downing trees and electrical lines in the area the night before, was even more successful in its second year, with over 150 children attending. Wilkins is a tireless volunteer who always volunteers to help at Long Island events and programs.



Randi Wilkins

2016 Junior Awards

E. Hawley Van Wyck, Jr. Boys' 14 Sportsman-ship Award: Jared Phillips

Edith Martin Girls' 18 Sportsmanship Award: Elysia Bolton

Henry Benisch Scholarship Award: Clare Handa

2016 Adult Awards

George Seewagen Award: Howie Arons

Umpire Service Award: Eileen Leonard

Special Service Award: Craig Fligstein

Regional Volunteer of the Year, Long Island: Randi Wilkins

tition Training Center and volunteers on the Long Island Regional board as Competition Training Chair. She has been a referee for the Sears and Addie Cups, National Father-Son and National Senior Women's tournaments, National Men's & Women's Open and National Boys 12 tournaments. In 2011 she received the USTA's Nicholas E. Powel Award for working primarily at sectional

being a longtime executive with the United Way of Long Island, Fligstein has volunteered with the USTA Long Island Region since 2004, including six years as a Regional Board Member and six years (and currently) as Secretary and Treasurer. A USPTA member, he also volunteers his time helping children from economically challenged households to receive free lessons. He helps to culti-

League Team Goes to Nationals



Christopher Morley Tennis Center's 40-and-over 4.5 Men's Singles team had a great time competing at USTA League Nationals in La Quinta, Calif. this fall.

The team, captained by Jonathan Klee and Lionel Goldberg, included teaching pros from several local tennis clubs including Robbie Wagner's, Point Set Indoor, Long Beach Tennis, Port Washington Tennis and Nassau Indoor. Team members were Adrian Chirici, Jeff Snow, Alex Zilberman, Dave Dikman, Keith Mattes, Sid Siddiqui, Marc Weingard, Tonny van de Pieterman and Rob Karen.



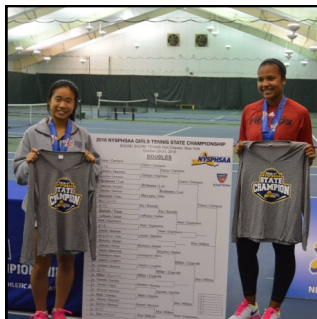
Nassau County Three-Peats As State Doubles Champs

The doubles team of Calista Sha & Morgan Wilkins won the 2016 New York State Public High School Athletic Association Tournament at Sound Shore Tennis in Port Chester. The Sha & Wilkins win marks the third year in a row that the doubles title has been won by a Nassau County pair. In 2015 and 2014, Oyster Bay's Courtney Kowalsky & Celeste Matute were the doubles champions.

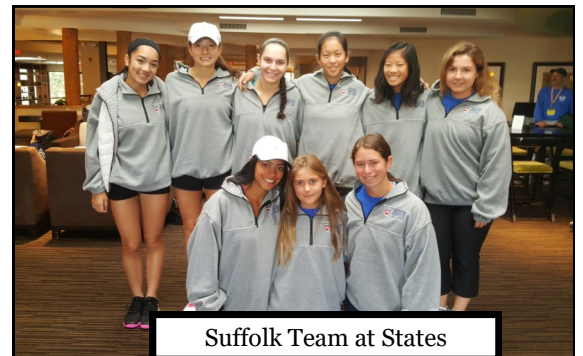
Kowalsky won third place in singles at this year's State Tournament, defeating Nassau County Singles Champ Merri Kelly Hannity of Cold Spring Harbor, who came in fourth place. Kowalsky also won the Nassau County Sportsmanship award at the tournament.

The USTA Long Island Region was pleased to present team sweatshirts for all Nassau and Suffolk participants at States.

Sha & Wilkins were part of a very successful Friends Academy team this season. In addition to becoming State Champions, the pair also were Nassau County Champions. The Friends team was not only the Nassau County Champion in 2016 but also won the Inaugural Long Island High School Tennis Executive Cup, defeating Suffolk County Champion Commack High School (see story, page 5).



Nassau Team at States



Suffolk Team at States

Nassau County Girls High School Results

Cold Spring Harbor ninth grader Merri Kelly Hannity defeated Oyster Bay senior Courtney Kowalsky 6-3, 1-6, 6-4 to become the 2016 Nassau County Girls' Singles Champion. Hannity and Kowalsky, as well as Great Neck North's Amy Delman (3rd place) and New Hyde Park's Steffi Antao (4th place) received All-State Honors. In doubles action, Calista Sha & Morgan Wilkins of Friends Academy defeated North Shore's Olivia Scordo & Lucia Hu 6-2, 6-4 to become the 2016 Nassau County Doubles Champions. Sha & Wilkins, Scordo & Hu, Manhasset's Maddie Clinton & Kyleigh Harmon (3rd) and Syosset's Risha Malhotra & Marissa Levine (4th) received All-State Honors.

In team play, Friends Academy won the County championship by defeating Great Neck North 6-1. The Nassau County Individual and Team Championships took place at Eisenhower Park.



Singles Champs



Doubles Champs

High School Tennis “Executive Cup” Launched

Nassau County Champion Friends Academy defeated Suffolk Champ Commack High School 5-2 in the Inaugural Long Island High School Tennis Executive Cup, sponsored by the USTA Long Island Region.

The match, which pitted two of the best teams representing their respective counties, consisted of three singles and four doubles matches in a two-out-of-three set contest held at

Burns Park in Massapequa. An awards ceremony recognizing all the participants of this special tennis event took place immediately after the last match.

The Executive Cup was piloted through the USTA Long Island Region as an event sanctioned by Section VIII Athletics. It was coordinated with the support of the Nassau County High School Coaches Association and the Suffolk County High School Tennis Coaches Association. This event will transition into a Long Island High School Championship starting in the 2017-18 school year, using the following rules and guidelines: when played in

Nassau County, the structure will be three singles courts and four doubles courts. When played in Suffolk County, the structure will be four singles courts and three doubles courts.



Friends Academy



Suffolk County Girls High School Results

Eastport-South Manor junior Jackie Bukzin defeated Kimberly Liao of Commack 6-2, 6-3 to become the 2016 Suffolk County Girls' Singles Champion. Bukzin and Liao, as well as Ward Melville's Denise Lai (3rd place) and Mercy's Rose Hayes (4th place) received All-State Honors. Half Hollow Hills East's Ariana Malik & Lauren Cherkin were this year's doubles champions, with a 6-0, 6-4 win over Olivia Faulhaber & Hailey Stoerback of Smithtown. Malik & Cherkin's Hills East teammates Gina LaRusso & Alexis Huber won third place by defeating Center Moriches' Gabrielle Valliant & Katelyn Vetack. All four doubles teams received All-State Honors. The Suffolk tournament took place at Suffolk County Community College-Selden.

In team competition, Commack High School defeated Ward Melville 6-1 to become the 2016 Suffolk County Champions. The match was played at William Floyd High School.



Bukzin



Malik & Cherkin

Newsday Names LI Players, Coach of the Year

Congratulations to all the members of Newsday's 2016 All-Long Island Girls' Tennis Team. They are:

- ♦ Julia Szymanska (Holy Trinity), Player of the Year
- ♦ Jackie Bukzin (Eastport-South Manor), Suffolk Player of the Year
- ♦ Kimberly Liao (Commack)
- ♦ Ariana Malik and Lauren Cherkin (Half Hollow Hills East)
- ♦ Morgan Wilkins and Calista Sha (Friends Academy)
- ♦ Courtney Kowalsky (Oyster Bay)
- ♦ Merri Kelly Hannity (Cold Spring Harbor)
- ♦ Jackie Clark (Commack), Coach of the Year



High Schools and Clubs Play for A Cause

High school tennis players and their teams, as well as tennis clubs, from across the LI Region participated in breast cancer awareness and fundraising programs throughout the fall.

In Nassau County, girls' varsity and JV teams from several high schools wore pink during October matches in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Participating schools (and their coaches) were: **Mas-sapequa** (Mike Pavlides), **Farmingdale** (George Golden), **Herricks** (Joy Solomon), **Jericho** (Colleen O'Connell), **North Shore** (Brian Kline), **Baldwin** (Lauren Jarmel), **Manhasset** (Eileen Cuneo), **Friends Academy** (Gino Uterano), **Syosset** (Shai Fisher), **Oceanside** (Jamie Connolly) and **Hewlett** (Abby Samlin).

Nassau's high school teams have been wearing pink for breast cancer awareness for the past several years.

In addition to wearing pink,



several teams also held fundraisers for breast cancer research. Collectively, they raised over \$5,300. They include:

The Suffolk County Tennis Coaches Association and **the Hamlet Golf &**

Country Club in Commack raised more than \$800 in their "Play for Pink" tournament. Girls from 10 Suffolk County high schools participated including Commack, Center Moriches, East Islip, Harborfields, Islip, Middle Country, Sayville, Smithtown East, Ward Melville and William Floyd.

The West Babylon girls HS team (Coach Keith Houghtaling) raised money for the Susan G. Komen Organization and wore pink at a match against Sayville.



Commack HS (Coach Jackie Clark) held its annual "Tennis with the Teachers" event raising money for the Breast Cancer Research Foundation.

The South Side HS girls varsity team in Rockville Centre (Coach Chris Colesanti), hosted its 3rd annual Student-Faculty Tennis Tournament fundraiser. The girls and their teacher partners raised over \$750 for breast cancer research.

Port Washington HS (Coach Shane Helfner) held its annual Breast Cancer

Awareness Teacher-Student Tennis Tournament, raising more than \$1,100 for the Komen Organization.

The Manhasset HS girls varsity and JV teams held a "Serve-A-Thon," raising \$2,665 for the Manhasset Women's Coalition Against Breast Cancer, a volunteer organization founded by community members to fund innovative research, increase awareness through education and provide support services to those with breast cancer and related diseases.

Among Long Island member clubs, events included:

Eastern Athletic Club at Blue Point hosted a "Rally for Hope." Club members, along with Tennis Coordinator Kristin Gibb and club

pros Gary Guadio and Aiko Tohmatsu, played rotation doubles. The event raised over \$600 for breast cancer research through Rally for the Cure and the Komen Organization.

Carefree Racquet Club in Merrick held a "Play for Pink" event, raising money for Rally for the Cure and the Komen Organization.

If you or your club is playing for a cause, let us know!! Email us at:

ustaonlongisland@gmail.com



Around the Region...

The **Commack HS Girls Varsity tennis team** shared their love of tennis with the school's Athletics For All, a club for students with developmental disabilities who love to play sports and compete. "We all had a great time



and will have more tennis clinics throughout the year," said Coach Jackie Clark. "The Varsity Girls Team loves volunteering and giving back."... USTA LI Region volunteers were proud to help the **Town of Hempstead Department of Parks & Recreation** at its Summer Kids' Tennis Clinic at Newbridge Road Park in

Bellmore. More than 100 children participated. USTA volunteers were Daniel Burgess, Fabiana Rezak Nicole Rezak and Jonathan Klee. Also in attendance was Nasrin Ahmad,

Town of Hempstead Town Clerk... The **USTA LI Region Green Ball Early Development Camp** was played at World Gym Racquet & Sports Arena this fall. Coaches were Akiko Tohmatsu, Jason Wass, Tito Perez, Ania Konopka and Jeff Rothstein. Kids 10-and-under who are interested in green ball tennis have many op-



portunities on LI. To register for youth tournaments or find 10-and-under play opportunities near you, please visit Tennislink.usta.com or www.usta.com... Jack Loucheim, creator of the **Bridgehampton Youth Tennis Project**, has updated the organization's web site with new details on the project and its success. The group now offers weekly after-school lessons. Loucheim says: "The kids are very enthusiastic ... and enjoy their time on the court."



USTA Eastern Long Island



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We are committed to the promotion and growth of tennis, the "lifetime sport," for people of all ages and abilities to play and enjoy the game. Through the efforts of volunteers, USTA staff and strategic partners, we are dedicated to the highest standards of integrity, honesty and ethics in developing tennis programs in local communities throughout Long Island. Our mission will be served by having our youth, our adults and corporate partners enjoy the "sport for a lifetime."

Visit us on the web at:
www.longisland.usta.com

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