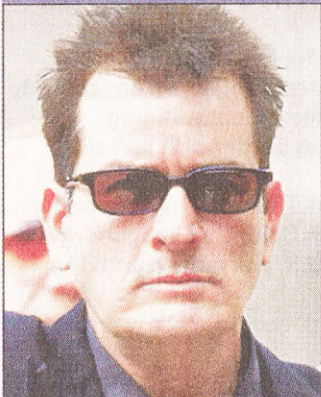


## MUST READ



### CHARLIE SHEEN GOES BALLISTIC

He's in trouble again, but this time, Charlie Sheen is blaming an allergic reaction.

The actor was hospitalized after throwing furniture and yelling in his Plaza Hotel room.

PAGE A 2



### PUMPKIN EATER

Bake colorful cucurbits into a cake with pineapples and plantains, puree the flesh for soup or mash it into veggie-fruit fritters

FOOD  
Page C 1



### EXPRESS BUS RELIEF

Maybe now you'll get a seat: The MTA plans to increase service on seven overcrowded express bus routes.

PAGE A 3

## INDEX

ADVICE C 5  
CLASSIFIED B 6-7  
COMICS C 4-5  
CROSSWORD C 6  
EDITORIAL A 12  
INSIDE OUT A 8  
LOTTERIES A 2  
MOVIES A 2  
OBITUARIES A 10-11  
SPORTS B 1  
TODAY IN HISTORY A 14  
YOUNG ADVANCE C 6

## WEATHERWATCHER

ALI BAKER, NEW DORP



HIGH 69, SHOWERS AND A FEW THUNDERSTORMS. PAGE B 8



8 31107 00800 8

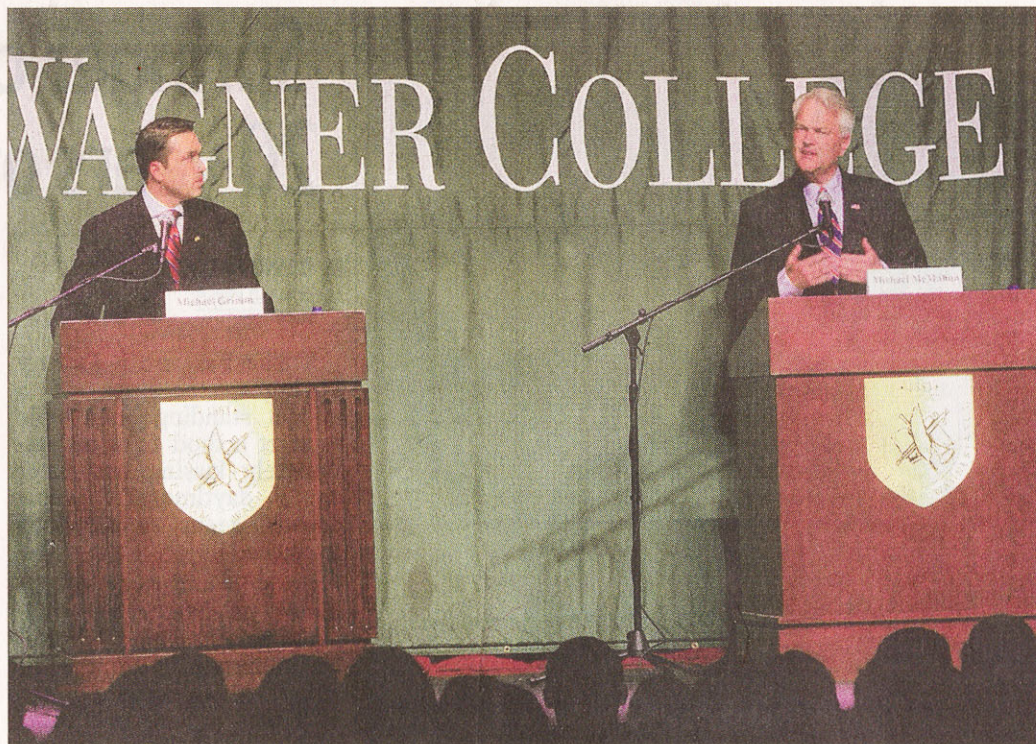


# Staten Island Advance

BREAKING NEWS ALL DAY ON SILIVE.COM

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2010

PUBLISHED SINCE 1886 | 75 CENTS



GOP challenger Michael Grimm, left, and Rep. Michael McMahon square off last night.

## It's gloves off on Grymes Hill

McMahon and Grimm debate before a packed house at Wagner College

By TOM WROBLESKI  
ADVANCE BOROUGH HALL BUREAU

Two of President Barack Obama's most controversial policies — the stimulus package and health care reform — were center stage last night as Rep. Michael McMahon

and GOP challenger Michael Grimm battled in a high-voltage

age debate in front of an audience of 350-plus in the Main Hall Theatre at Wagner College,

PAGE A 12

Grymes Hill.

The debate was sponsored by the Advance, the Staten

Island Chamber of Commerce and NY1.

McMahon (D-Staten Island/Brooklyn) and Grimm are in the homestretch of their contentious House contest, which takes place amid anger over the sluggish economy and predictions that Obama's sinking poll numbers and robust Tea Party movements across the country will sweep the GOP back

SEE DEBATE, PAGE A 4



With election looming, supporters of Rep. Michael McMahon and Michael Grimm were out in force.

## Odd turn of events on term limits

Remember to flip ballot for referendum, which appears in small print

By PETER N. SPENCER  
ADVANCE CITY HALL BUREAU

A lot of people probably would like to forget about the term limits fiasco.

New York's new electronic voting system may make that easy.

That's because, after voters choose their candidates on a paper ballot Tuesday, they could easily miss a slew

of questions appearing on the back of the sheet, in small print.

The quirky ballot design has drawn criticism from city officials and good-government groups, who are concerned that voters will miss an opportunity to voice their opinion on an issue that has been the talk of the town for two years. It was one of the factors that led yesterday to the ouster of Board of Elections Executive Director George Gonzalez.

Then again, New Yorkers should be used to being ignored on term limits.

In two previous elections, voters here overwhelmingly supported limiting elected officials to two consecutive four-year terms, only to witness the mayor and City Council invalidate those votes via legislative fiat in October 2008.

The first question on this year's referendum will ask voters if they would like to change it back again.

A "yes" to that question would be a vote to restore the maximum number of consecutive four-year terms

SEE TERM, PAGE A 4

## Report bares Schneiderman's use of income tax loophole

Some look askance at legal maneuver by AG candidate, who is pledged to clean up Albany

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

Democratic candidate for state Attorney General Eric Schneiderman has been reaping tax benefits for time he worked — and time he didn't



SCHNEIDERMAN

— in the state capital, according to a NY1 report.

Schneiderman reportedly deducted tens of thousands of dollars in

work expenses for days he wasn't in the Senate chamber, or quite possibly even in

Albany — weekend days, too. In all, more than 200 additional days were written off, his campaign acknowledges to NY1.

And it's all perfectly legal. The Democrat was taking advantage of a loophole in the tax law.

While it's legal and not unheard of among legislators, some wonder whether it fits

SEE SCHNEIDERMAN, PAGE A 4

## Turned down by the Taliban

Feds say former Islander washes out in quest to be jihad warrior

By JOHN ANNESE and FRANK DONNELLY  
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

Former Annadale and Prince's Bay resident Abdel Hameed Shehadeh wanted to die as a "martyr," federal authorities say, fighting against his native United States — so he tried to join the Taliban.

So determined was the 21-year-old, one-time Tottenville High School student to join a jihadist group that he allegedly flew to Pakistan and Jordan in 2008 but was turned away by both countries. The U.S. citizen also tried, unsuccessfully, that year to enlist in the U.S. Army, as a means to deploy to Iraq, where he intended to commit "treason" and kill U.S. soldiers, prosecutors allege.

### SCHEMES UNRAVELED

But those deadly schemes unraveled, and Shehadeh, who now lives in Hawaii, instead faces up to eight years in federal prison. Prosecutors have charged him with making false statements in a matter involving international terrorism. He was arrested Friday in Honolulu.

Federal authorities allege Shehadeh believed it was the duty of Muslims in the United States to fight with compatriots in Palestine, Afghanistan and Somalia against their enemies, including U.S. military forces.

The suspect is being returned to New York to answer the charges filed in Brooklyn federal court. A spokesman for Loretta E. Lynch, U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York, did not know when the proceedings here will take place.

"As this case demonstrates, we and our partners in law enforcement are committed to preventing terrorist acts before the plots can be set in motion," said Ms. Lynch in a statement.

As a teenager, Shehadeh lived with his parents and his four brothers — two older, two younger — on the 300 block of Segune Avenue, not far from Hylan Boulevard, near the Prince's Bay campus of Staten Island University Hospital.

### 'REGULAR KID'

His family's landlord, Bader Suleiman, said Shehadeh never struck him as an extremist. Rather, Suleiman said, he seemed like a typical American teenager, interested in basketball and video games.

"He's a really good kid. Yeah, I was surprised. He was a regular kid," Suleiman said. "I was shocked."

The family moved to the 400 block of Drumgoole Road West three years ago, he said. At that point, Shehadeh was still in his sophomore year at Tottenville. About two years ago in the Staten Island Mall, Suleiman recalled, his wife ran into Shehadeh's mother, who remarked that FBI agents were following her family.

No one answered the door at Shehadeh's Drumgoole

SEE TERROR, PAGE A 6



STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE/JAN SOMMA-HAMMEL

Andrew Geocos, 2, of Great Kills, tests out the slide in the Nautical Playground in the Seaside Wildlife Nature Park.

## Play's the thing as 2 parks debut

Great Kills and West Brighton play host to newest recreational jewels

By DEBORAH YOUNG  
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

The official debut yesterday of two play areas, one on the North Shore and the other on the South Shore of this Borough of Parks, celebrated community members who helped push forward the transformation of once-desolate swaths of land.

And as city officials and lawmakers cut ceremonial ribbons on the \$2.25 million

Nautical Playground in Great Kills and the \$4.3 million renovation on a synthetic turf multipurpose field at Corporal Thompson Park, West Brighton, they also discussed the notion of stewardship. Pledging to keep the recreational areas clean and safe, they looked to the public to provide extra eyes, ears and hands.

"From a conservancy or individual volunteers who come forward and adopt a park or a green street, we want to encourage that," said newly appointed Borough Commissioner of Parks and

SEE PARKS, PAGE A 6



## LOCAL NEWS



STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE/HILTON FLORES

There were more than 350 people in the audience for last night's debate at Wagner College.

## DEBATE FROM PAGE A 1

## It's gloves off on Grymes Hill

into control of Congress.

Speaking to a packed house that included members of the Island's political, business and cultural communities, McMahon and Grimm touted their opposing stands on the \$787 billion stimulus package.

McMahon said the stimulus had provided hundreds of millions of dollars for improvements to the Staten Island Expressway and the St. George Ferry Terminal, as well as tax cuts for the middle class and businesses.

The bill, he said, had stopped an economic "free-fall."

## STIMULUS TOO COSTLY

Grimm countered that the stimulus was too costly and had led to overmuch borrowing. He said it hadn't created the promised jobs and that some of the tax breaks went to those who don't pay taxes.

"I don't think we should be borrowing from our great-grandchildren to pay for our roads and bridges," Grimm said.

The two also differ on Obama's signature health care reform law, which McMahon voted against in the House.

Calling the bill an "out-right disaster and broken in just about every way," Grimm said, "the only answer is to repeal this bill."

He said McMahon's dissent amounted to a "silent no."

But McMahon said his vote had put him at odds with Democratic leaders and was proof of his independence.

"Not only did I vote against it once, I voted against it twice," said McMahon.

Showing some of the fire that the race has generated, McMahon objected when Grimm accused him of voting for a "deem and pass" measure aimed at approving the bill without an up-or-

## More on the web



For a video and photo gallery of last night's

congressional debate at Wagner College, go to [silive.com/video](http://silive.com/video) and [silive.com/photos](http://silive.com/photos).

down House vote.

"There was never a vote in the House of Representatives for deem and pass," he said. "It never happened."

## ANOTHER CLASH

The two clashed again when Grimm slammed McMahon for voting for an 18.5 percent property-tax hike while serving in the City Council.

McMahon countered that the increase was necessary to close the city budget deficit after 9/11. He said the city had given homeowners a \$400 rebate and had rolled back rates.

But Grimm said the tax is still in effect.

"Don't distort the facts," he told McMahon.

In saying that the city resets the tax rate every year, McMahon retorted, "I hate to school you on this, but I'll school you."

A question about the military and economic threats posed by China sparked another testy exchange.

McMahon said Grimm had signed a GOP pledge to retain a tax break for companies that ship jobs to countries like China. "I will not do that," he said.

Citing independent fact-checkers like The Associated Press, Grimm said the charge was "blatantly false."

"I signed a pledge to not raise taxes when I get to Congress," he said. "It's that simple."

The two also battled over a central theme seen in races across the country: Voter

anger.

"I am concerned about the economy, concerned about the national debt," said McMahon. "But I don't think anger is a way to solve our problems."

He said lawmakers need to sit down and solve problems without "partisanship" and "rhetoric."

## EXCESSIVE SPENDING

Grimm, a former FBI agent and Gulf War veteran, said the country had begun to "circle the drain," thanks to excessive spending and borrowing and an expansion of government.

"I have to be honest with you," he said. "I'm angry, I'm frustrated and I'm disappointed."

Speaking on immigration, McMahon said he supports the DREAM Act, which would give exemplary children brought to this country by undocumented parents a "rigorous" path to citizenship.

McMahon, whose mother emigrated from Germany years ago, also said that illegal immigrants who commit felonies should be deported, and said he had voted to allocate \$500 million to build a border wall.

Grimm countered that those who are in this country illegally already have committed a crime. He said the DREAM Act would be the "beginning of amnesty" for illegals, and that he supports building a fence along the Mexican border.

The candidates took questions from Advance Editorial Page Editor Mark Hanley, Chamber president and CEO Linda Baran and NY1 reporter Amanda Farinacci. Advance Managing Editor William Huus moderated the debate.

Tom Wroblewski may be reached at [wroblewski@siadvance.com](mailto:wroblewski@siadvance.com). Read his [polit.bureau blog at http://www.silive.com/newslogs/politics/](http://www.silive.com/newslogs/politics/).