



Staten Island Advance

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STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE/ANTHONY DePRIMO

Rep. Michael Grimm helps Troop 77 Boy Scout Raj Patel fold pocket-sized American flags to be sent to the troops overseas as part of the youngster's Eagle Scout project.

A prince in the realm of bingo and mahjong

Handclaps and hugs are balm for busy Grimm, who's resolute in the face of allegations

By JUDY L. RANDALL
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

With a "What? Me worry?" posture, a star-power profile on the Hill and the unwaver-

ing backing of the local GOP, Rep. Michael Grimm glided through a jam-packed schedule of district events last week, determined to keep front and center his avowed reason for running for Congress: Constituent service.

"It's what keeps me going," said Grimm, plunging into a meet-and-greet with

SEE GRIMM, PAGE A 4

Stabbing victim's fiancée picked cafe for its mellow vibe; cops hunt suspect, won't name him

By JOHN ANNESE
and JILLIAN JORGENSEN
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

Antonio Lacertosa's bride-to-be chose the restaurant because she saw it as an oasis of calm, not a rowdy after-hours spot.

She knew the management at the Espana Restaurant, recalled Lacertosa's brother Joseph, and had texted ahead to let the staff know they were coming.

Instead of calm, there was utter, lethal chaos in the early hours of Saturday.

Lacertosa, 27, of Huguenot, was stabbed to death in a brawl sparked when one of his friends, reportedly a Port Authority police officer, urinated outside the Annadale restaurant and ran afoul of

workers there, according to law enforcement sources.

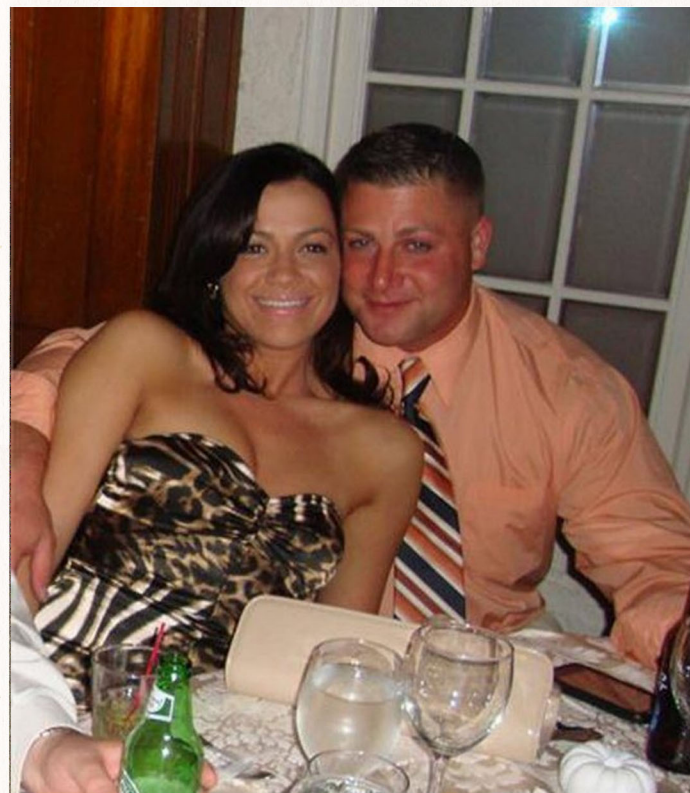
Surveillance video caught a clear accounting of the melee, said one law enforcement source: "The video was like a WWF Royal Rumble. ... People were being tossed on top of cars; it was crazy."

The suspect in the fatal knifing remained at large last night — police know his identity, and were looking to locate him, sources said.

A spokesman with the NYPD's Deputy Commissioner for Public Information office declined yesterday to release the name of any suspect in the case.

The restaurant is shuttered for the foreseeable future. Joseph Lacertosa said he wasn't sure what he'd say to

SEE SLAYING, PAGE A 8



Antonio Lacertosa and his bride-to-be, Bridgette Schneider.

INSIDE YOUR ADVANCE

TRAUMA — THEN TEARS

Little-understood complication of severe brain injury besets a Prince's Bay man who was struck by a drunken driver.

HEALTH

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THREE'S BAD COMPANY

In unrelated cases, federal authorities bring charges in Brooklyn against a trio of Islanders.

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FOG IN THE A.M.; MOSTLY CLOUDY
HIGH OF 67° PAGE A 12



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"I really appreciate putting a name and face, not just somebody was killed here. He was my son, a brother, a classmate." — Nancy Tillman, mother of Ronald (RJ) Tillman



STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE PHOTOS/HILTON FLORES

Meredith Sladek and Pete Lang bolt a sign above the "Ghost Bike" to mark the spot where Wagner College nursing student Ronald (RJ) Tillman was killed by a hit-and-run driver.

Mourners, riders brave traffic for tribute to tragic bicyclist



Nancy Tillman of Syracuse is comforted by her sister, Joan Snihur, during the memorial on Howard Avenue near where her son was killed Feb. 12.

'Ghost Bike' on Grymes Hill dedicated to the memory of Wagner College student Ronald (RJ) Tillman

By JILLIAN JORGENSEN
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

Even as they stood on the side of the road to honor someone killed by traffic, the cars flew by close enough to make people jump.

Cyclists, pedestrians, friends and family yesterday dedicated a white "Ghost Bike" on Howard Avenue to Ronald (RJ) Tillman, 29, a Wagner College nursing student killed by a hit-and-run driver on

SEE BIKE, PAGE A 8

Potent counter to gun violence

Survivor of Va. Tech massacre screens 'Living for 32' at Island church

By JOHN ANNESE
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

Colin Goddard was in French class the day in April 2007 when Seung-Hui Cho opened fire and killed 32 people at Virginia Tech.

Shot three times, Goddard played dead as Cho let loose a fusillade of bullets in the room, then killed himself.

"And then I heard, 'Black tag, black tag, black tag,'" police and EMT lingo for the deceased in a disaster, "and then I realized there were other students who didn't make it," Goddard says in a video documentary, "Living for 32."

Yesterday, Goddard brought the video, and his message, to an audience on Staten Island, addressing a group of people — many of whom have lost family members to gun violence — at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in West Brighton.

Goddard, speaking on behalf of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, is advocating for federal laws that would require back-



STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE/HILTON FLORES

Colin Goddard, a survivor of the shootings at Virginia Tech in 2007, speaks at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in West Brighton yesterday.

ground checks for gun sales made at gun shows.

In the documentary, he recounts the shooting, his recovery, and his gun-control efforts, including an undercover trip to a gun show at which he was able to buy an assault rifle without showing a driver's license.

Goddard said he's not advocating for the banning of guns nor denying people their constitutional right to

SEE GUNS, PAGE A 8

TRIUMPH SEALED WITH A KISS



STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE/HILTON FLORES

Curtis' Brittany Carroll busses the trophy extended by teammate Kristen Olsen after the Warriors crushed Leon M. Goldstein High School, 61-30, yesterday at CCNY to capture the city PSAL "A" championship. Curtis will play for the state "A" title on Saturday in Albany. For the story, see SPORTS, Page B 1.

Mourners, bikers brave traffic for tribute to tragic bicyclist

Feb. 12.

The cyclists continued on their way to meet up with other riders from across the city, converging as part of the seventh annual Memorial Ride and Walk for Fallen Bicyclists and Pedestrians.

Tillman's mother, Nancy Tillman of Syracuse, said it would be the fourth memorial to her son she has attended.

"I think this is the one that's going to really bring closure to our family," she said.

The goal of the event is to raise awareness about the plight of pedestrians and cyclists — and to reduce traffic deaths. But Ms. Tillman had just contended with drivers speeding around the curve on Howard Avenue Saturday, when she was decorating the jarring, stark-white "Ghost Bike" placed there by Transportation Alternatives, a bicyclist and pedestrian advocacy group, with personal effects identifying the spot as a memorial to her son.

"We almost got run off the road," she said.

And yesterday, as mourners and riders gathered around the bicycle at a spot that is just yards away from the college but has no sidewalks, cars whizzed by dangerously close. One driver screeched around the corner as rider Nick Rozak played bagpipes. The driver was laughing.

"We can't even stand on this road right now and have a true moment of silence, because it's almost like if you're a cyclist or a pedestrian, you're a second-class citizen," Amerika Grewal, 35, of Grymes Hill, told the assemblage. "And the time has come where it has to stop."

Meredith Sladek with Transportation Alternatives said the goal of the Staten Island leg of the event, which saw cyclists ride to Wagner College from St. George and then head back to the ferry, was to create awareness for safer streets around Grymes Hill.

"There are two schools in this area and, as you can see, the streets don't have many pedestrian accommodations," she said.

In 2011, 134 pedestrians and 21 bicyclists were killed by traffic, Ms. Sladek said.

"They're all preventable," she said.

The group lobbies for traffic-calming measures, and asks drivers to be more mindful about their surroundings.

"These people aren't annoying cyclists or pesky pedestrians," she said. "They are neighbors, our friends, college students."

While the bagpipes skirled, Ms. Tillman wiped tears from beneath her sunglasses. A white sign to match the bike was hung on a street post — "Cyclist Killed Here." But Ms. Tillman had already decorated the pole with her son's name.

"I really appreciate putting a name and face, not just somebody was killed here. He was my son, a brother, a



STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE/HILTON FLORES

Elizabeth Pesce of Westerleigh speaks about her friend Ronald (RJ) Tillman at the Ghost Bike memorial on Howard Avenue where the Wagner College nursing student was killed by a hit-and-run driver.

More on the web



For additional photos from the ceremony, go to silive.com/photos.

classmate," she told the crowd.

His friend Elizabeth Pesce, 28, of Westerleigh, wore RJ's helmet as she rode her bike.

"He loved everybody he knew," she said. "He was just the kind of guy nobody had any problem with."

The two nursing students bonded over a shared passion for music and travel, she said. She helped him find the Westerleigh apartment he was moving into. She was supposed to pick him up and drive him to work the day after he was killed. When the weather got nicer, they were going to ride their bicycles to school together.

She hoped what happened to him would never happen to someone else.

"All they need to do is put speed bumps on the road," she said.

Cyclists who attended the event echoed the need for traffic-calming changes in the area. Laura Barlament of Silver Lake was hit by a car on Howard Avenue while riding her bike to work at Wagner College.

"She just didn't see me, for some reason," Ms. Barlament said. "She knocked me off my bike. Thank God she didn't run over me."

Ms. Barlament had never felt safe riding in the area, she said, and knew she would eventually be hit. So she started to think about what she could do to change the situation, and began lobbying for changes.

"This could have happened to any of us," cyclist Hugh McGuire, 68, of Rosebank said.

Andy Lausten, 47, of Stapleton, said even though he's a very safe cyclist, there's always a nagging thought in the back of his head that he could be killed on his bike.

"I actually box, and I feel safer when I box than I do on the bike," he said.

If he gets knocked down in the boxing ring, Lausten said, he's much likelier to be able to get back up again.