

MERMAIDS: Mom Writes Environmental Kids Book

FROM PAGE B1

Environmental organizations, some local, some national, so families can get involved in finding solutions.

Mancuso understands the attraction children have for the beach. She grew up in St. James near Long Island Sound and recalls that in elementary school, a teacher introduced her to the wonders of marine biology. Though she didn't pursue the subject in college at the University of Buffalo — "I realized I wasn't that great in biology," she said — that attraction for the ocean never left her. So 16 years ago, Mancuso and her husband, Don Kelly, moved from Buffalo to Hampton Bays so she could once again, live by the sea.

"I'm always on the beach and always exploring nature," Mancuso said.

"The Fin-Tastic Cleanup," which will be released May 4, is Mancuso's first book and it's illustrated by Jenna Guidi, a close family friend who Mancuso has known since she was little.

"She's a brilliant illustrator

Top 10 Debris Items Found In Oceans

Per the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, approximately 1.4 billion pounds of trash enters the ocean each year.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Cigarette butts: | 5,716,331 |
| 2. Food wrappers: | 3,728,712 |
| 3. Straws/stirrers: | 3,668,871 |
| 4. Forks, knives, spoons: | 1,968,065 |
| 5. Plastic beverage bottles: | 1,754,908 |
| 6. Plastic bottle caps: | 1,390,232 |
| 7. Plastic grocery bags: | 964,541 |
| 8. Other plastic bags: | 938,929 |
| 9. Plastic lids: | 728,892 |
| 10. Plastic cups, plates: | 656,276 |



FACTS AND FIGURES FROM "THE FIN-TASTIC CLEANUP"

and I watched her grow over the years," said Mancuso. "She grew up in St. James, like me. She graduated from SVA [School of Visual Arts] and recently got her master's to become an art teacher."

Mancuso explains that the inspiration for the story in "The Fin-Tastic Cleanup" began with a trip over the Ponquogue Bridge in Hampton Bays and her sharing with her daughters the classic fairytale "Three Billy Goats Gruff," but with a twist.

"It started as mermaids under the bridge instead of trolls," said Mancuso. "I thought, let's make it a little happier. It's funny how stories unfold and change in a thousand ways."

While the mermaids' story in "The Fin-Tastic Cleanup" does, indeed, have an upbeat tone and a happy ending as they find a solution to remove the debris from the ocean, Mancuso notes that her own daughters have frequently felt distressed by the garbage

they encounter at their local beach.

"They've always noticed the trash in the water. When they were little, they couldn't get in the ocean to get the balloons, so they'd say, 'Mommy, go get it so it doesn't hurt the animals,'" said Mancuso, who said she would do her best to retrieve the offending material from the waves.

Now that they're older, she notes, Sarafina and Lucia take part in beach clean-ups with the Girl Scouts, not unlike the human characters in her book.

"They are always inspired," said Mancuso.

When asked if she's noticed an uptick in garbage locally as a result of the increase in people relocating to the East End due to the pandemic in the last year, Mancuso responded, "Everybody came out here and moved to their parents' summer homes or rented, and I don't think they have the same mindfulness as the residents who live here year 'round."

"One thing that drives me bananas is the masks," she added. "There are so many masks and gloves all over the beach, the parking lots and everywhere. When Jenna and I were in the middle of putting the book together, we went on a bike ride and saw so many masks. I said, 'We have to put a mask in the book.'"

"It's having such an impact, and in 20 years, we're still going to



Author Laura Mancuso reading her book with daughters Sarafina, 9, and Lucia, 7, who were the inspiration behind the story. COURTESY LAURA MANCUSO

Ocean Pollution And Ways To Help

From the 33rd Annual International Coastal Cleanup of the Ocean Conservancy Organization 2019 Report:

1,080,358 volunteers in a worldwide effort of 122 countries walked over 22,000 miles of coastline. They removed 23,333,816 pounds of garbage from the oceans and recorded their findings on Clean Swell or printed data forms.

Per Ocean Crusaders:

Worldwide, 13,000 to 15,000 pieces of plastic are dumped into the ocean every day. It can take 20 to 100 years for a plastic bag to break up. Plastic bags never fully break down, they just break into smaller pieces causing animals to mistake them for food. Approximately 1 million sea birds and 100,000 sea mammals are killed per year due to pollution.

be picking these up."

Fortunately, Mancuso is raising two daughters who are already attuned to the importance of protecting their environment and will likely stay involved with the issue as they grow into young women.

In the meantime, how do Sarafina and Lucia like seeing themselves portrayed as mermaids in the pages of their mother's new book?

"They think it's the coolest thing in the world," Mancu-

so said.

On Saturday, May 22, Laura Mancuso will take part in The Friends of the Hampton Bays Library Kids' Day Book Sale. The sale will be held on the lawn of the Hampton Bays Library, 52 Ponquogue Avenue, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mancuso will read "The Fin-Tastic Cleanup" at noon followed by a Q&A and a book signing. For more information, visit lauramancuso.com or hamp-tonbayslibrary.org.

Environmental Groups To Join Nationally And Locally

National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration
Ocean Conservancy Organization
Ocean Crusaders
The Blue Frontier campaign
Greenpeace
4ocean
Surfrider Foundation
NY Marine Rescue Center
Atlantic Marine Conservation Society
Cooperative Extension Suffolk County

noaa.gov
oceanconservancy.org
oceancrusaders.com
bluefront.org
greenpeace.org
4ocean.com
surfrider.org
nymarinerescue.org
amseas.org
ccesuffolk.org/marine



In March 2020, Hampton Theatre Company (HTC) was set to open A.R. Gurney's "Sylvia" with Amanda Griemsmann in the title role and Edward Kassar as Greg when COVID-19 shut it down. On May 27, HTC will finally bring its production of "Sylvia" to the stage with Griemsmann still playing Sylvia, but with Greg being portrayed by a surprise HTC performer. TOM KOCHIE

'Sylvia' Opens New Theater Season At HTC

More than a year after it was scheduled to open, "Sylvia," by A.R. Gurney, will be the Hampton Theatre Company's (HTC) first production at the Quogue Community Hall since all theaters in New York were shuttered on March 12, 2020 at the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.

The romantic comedy about the impact of a stray dog on an empty-nest marriage runs May 27, through June 13. In accordance with state guidance, seating capacity will be limited and audience members required to wear face coverings while inside the theater. Tickets will only be sold in advance at hamptontheatre.org, or 631-653-8955.

In "Sylvia," a sassy stray dog (played by a human) is brought home and becomes a major bone of contention for Greg and Kate. A street-smart mixture of (possibly) Lab and poodle, Sylvia offers Greg an escape from the unknowns of middle age. While Kate con-

siders Sylvia a rival for Greg's affection, Sylvia sees Kate as clueless about the bond between man and dog. After a series of hilarious and touching complications, all three learn lessons about the importance of compromise and the power of love.

The production is directed by HTC's artistic director Diana Marbury and the cast features Amanda Griemsmann as Sylvia, Catherine Maloney as Kate, and George Loizides in three different roles. Adding a touch of mystery, Greg will be played by "a familiar HTC face."

Because of limited seating capacity, HTC has added two additional Saturday matinees to the regular schedule. "Sylvia" runs at the Quogue Community Hall, 125 Jessup Avenue, from May 27 to June 13. Performances are Thursdays and Fridays at 7 p.m., Saturdays at 2:30 and 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2:30 p.m. Discount tickets for "Sylvia" are available.

A New Documentary Visits 'Sesame Street'

This week Sag Harbor Cinema opens two brand new documentaries, "Street Gang" and "Sisters with Transistors."

Inspired by Michael Davis's book, "Street Gang: How We Got to Sesame Street" follows the making of the renowned PBS children's television program. Go inside the hearts and minds of the show's creators — artists and educators who established one of the most influential children's series in history. With behind-the-scenes footage and over 20 original interviews, "Street Gang: How We Got to Sesame Street" introduces audiences to the visionaries who set out to entertain and educate young minds by harnessing the power of television with furry characters, catchy songs, and a diverse cast. The 7:30 p.m. screening on Satur-



A scene from the documentary "Street Gang: How We Got to Sesame Street."

day, May 8, will feature a Q&A via Zoom with Marilyn Agrelo, the film's director, moderated by Sag Harbor Cinema's artistic director, Giulia D'Agnolo Vallan.

Directed by Lisa Rovner, "Sisters with Transistors" is the untold story of electron-

ic music's female pioneers — composers who embraced machines and their liberating technologies to transform how music is produced. Narrated by Laurie Anderson, the film maps a new history of electronic music through women whose radical experi-

mentations redefined boundaries and restored the central role of women in the history of music and society at large.

As Laurie Spiegel, one of the film's subjects, explains: "We women were especially drawn to electronic music when the possibility of a woman composing was in itself controversial. Electronics let us make music that could be heard by others without having to be taken seriously by the male-dominated establishment."

Also being screened at the cinema this week is "The Truffle Hunters," directed by Michael Dweck and Gregory Kershaw, and "Limbo," directed by Ben Sharrock.

Sag Harbor Cinema is at 90 Main Street. For showtimes and tickets, go to sagharborcinema.org.

Dance Education with The A&G Dance Company

Youth Hip Hop/Tap/Contemporary Dance Workshop
Tuesdays • 4-7pm

4:00-4:45 Intro to Dance • Ages 3-5

A creative movement class that is fun and relaxed for boys and girls

4:45-7:00 Mixed Style Dance Workshop Ages 6-teen

Learn Hip Hop, Tap and Contemporary in this Workshop. Ages mixed and variations given depending on level

Please bring sneakers, tap shoes, ballet or jazz shoes, dance attire (leggings/tights and a leo or comfy clothing for hip hop — NO JEANS!), water, a light snack and a mask.



If students would like to take 1 or 2 styles only, here are the breakdowns of the classes:

4:45-5:30 Hip Hop

5:30-6:15 Tap

6:15-7:00 Contemporary

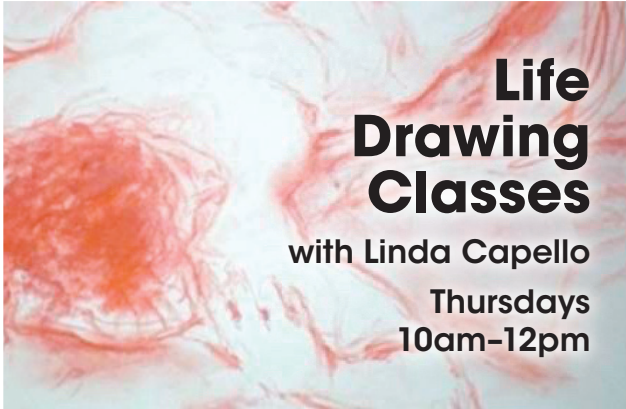
Intro to Contemporary Dance • Ages 3-5
Thursdays at 4pm



LINE DANCING with Natalie Boyle

Fridays • 5:30pm

Kick up your heels for some fun Country Line Dancing lessons with Natalie Boyle. Learn fun dances that the top Long Island bands and DJs play. Great way to exercise, socialize, and meet new friends! All levels are welcome — basic and intermediate steps will be shared.



Life Drawing Classes

with Linda Capello

Thursdays
10am-12pm

Check our website for virtual events, updated information on exhibitions and more.

Class sizes are limited. Masks are mandatory and we practice social distancing.



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