

Long Island Business NEWS

Where Business Gets Down to Business

August 25-31, 2017

■ Ones to Watch Hospitality



JAMES BRANTUK



CAROLYN BROWN-BENSON



KEVIN LESSING



SAM MCCLELLAND



CHRIS SCALA



NIKKI THEISSEN

James Brantuk

Director of Operations
The Island Boatyard and Marina

For the last nine years, James Brantuk has directed operations for the Island Boathouse and Marina, a Shelter Island business serving more than 75 seasonal boaters in addition to visiting vessels. The company recently launched a 4,000-square-foot private event space, The Boathouse Shelter Island, which overlooks the water. Early in his career, Brantuk worked for Knight Equity Markets, where he was responsible for equity research, stock purchases and portfolio management. He then served as a property manager for WBW Realty/North Fork Management, researching commercial real estate markets in Nassau and Suffolk.

Carolyn Brown-Benson

Sales Associate
Holiday Inn Express Stony Brook

Carolyn Brown-Benson is a recent addition to the Holiday Inn Express Stony Brook, which welcomed her as a sales associate. In addition to this role, she performs at the hotel as the singer of Blue Bayou, a Linda Ronstadt cover band. Brown-Benson previously held marketing positions with Marchon Eyewear in Melville and Mid Island Electric in Commack. She began her performing career in musical theater while attending Shenandoah Conservatory. She sang at the Performing Arts Studio in Port Jefferson and appeared in shows with CM Performing Arts in Oakdale.

Kevin Lessing

Executive Director, Food Service Management
Lessing's

Kevin Lessing has held a variety of positions at his family's six-generation hospitality business, which was founded in 1890. He began as a server, working primarily at picnics held at the company's various catering venues. He moved up to manager of an inn and then became director of business development for the company. He moved up to director of the Southern New York region for the Food Service Management division before taking the helm as executive director. In this role, he oversees more than 450 employees in 70 locations, who serve up to 40,000 meals daily.

Sam McClelland

Executive Chef/Co-Owner
Bell & Anchor

Sam McClelland is executive chef of Bell & Anchor, a five-year-old Sag Harbor restaurant that he co-owns with David Loewenberg. McClelland's seafood-centric menu focuses on local, seasonal and sustainable offerings from both the land and sea, sourcing ingredients from local providers, including vineyards and microbreweries. Earlier this year, McClelland and Loewenberg were presented with the Snail of Approval from the East End chapter of Slow Food, indicating that the restaurant provides quality food that is mostly local and sustainably raised and grown.

Chris Scala

Director of Marketing
Long Island Food Council

Chris Scala serves as director of marketing for the Long Island Food Council, a two-year-old trade organization for the local food and beverage industries. A digital media consultant with Is-landia-based marketing firm Driven Local, Scala applies his digital marketing expertise to assist the Long Island Food Council with its digital marketing efforts, including social media marketing and designing the organization's website. As part of his role, he educates the other Food Council members on the current digital landscape.

Nikki Theissen

Director of Partner and Visitor Relations
Discover Long Island

Hauppauge-based tourism group Discover Long Island promoted Nikki Theissen to director of partner and visitor relations. She was most recently public relations manager. Over the last four years, Theissen has worked to improve cooperative opportunities and strengthen relationships with Discover Long Island's 500-plus partners. In her new role, she will continue to focus on reinforcing organizational messaging and providing educational experiences for businesses within the tourism industry. She will also focus on building community among partner organizations to allow for more streamlined brand messaging and ease of shared materials.

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