

## Coming Soon to a County Near You – Nassau

by Rich Silverman, CIC



Rich Silverman, CIC

This past year I was invited to join the advisory committee for the Nassau County Office of Consumer Affairs (NCCA). Along with other members representing several trades, we sit with Commissioner Gregory A. May and his counsel and discuss our concerns.

Commissioner May has been excellent in hearing our concerns and answering all our questions. In addition, he has kept us apprised of the improvements, changes and requirements that are required within Nassau County regarding licensing. Here are several items that were addressed and are continually being improved upon:

1. Nassau County Office of Consumer Affairs has a new website <https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/1547/Consumer-Affairs>. You should check to make sure your name and company are listed correctly.
2. Consumers will be able to go online and see who is licensed and who is not.
3. You will soon be able to renew your licenses online at the website.
4. NCCA is making many improvements to its system of maintaining and tracking licensed contractors. It is heavily invested in computerizing their entire office.
5. To renew your license, you will be required to take the class for proper lead-paint removal.
6. NCCA will soon be checking your insurance to ensure that your insurance matches your coverage for which you are being licensed. If you are licensed to install and service sprinkler systems, then your insurance (general liability and workers' comp should show

that) however you are not licensed to build homes. You would need a separate license to build homes.

7. License categories are coming soon. Right now, yours is a home-improvement license.
8. Stickers for licensed contractors may be coming back. You will have to put a sticker on your vehicle(s) to show you are licensed.
9. New I.D. cards will be the future, and will be in plastic.
10. NCCA does not make the laws. To change the requirements for obtaining a new license or existing license, those changes have to be made through the Nassau County legislature.

Currently we are working with Luis Montes, our lobbyist, to meet with the legislature and discuss adding some minimum standards to obtaining and or maintaining a license in Nassau County. (A report from Luis appears on page 4 of this issue.) We also are looking into working with the Suffolk County Division of Consumer Affairs.

Please feel free to contact me with any information you may have regarding licensing in the community where you live and work. You can reach me via email at [rsilverman@rainrich.com](mailto:rsilverman@rainrich.com). Happy Trails!





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# IANY 2019 Golf Outing

The morning weather forecast for prime time at the 2019 IANY Golf Outing was less than encouraging. AccuWeather was predicting “mostly cloudy w/t-storms” at 3:00 p.m. Yikes!

Fortunately, the weather gods overrode the meteorologists. Another contributing factor to the day’s success was George Iannacone.

George is an arborist with SiteOne Landscape Supply, and has organized numerous events. But this year’s outing was his debut as a golf-tournament organizer. He nailed it.

For starters, George brought IANY into the 21st Century. While electronic and postal service mailings continued to promote the event, he brought IANY further into the digital era with golfer registration and sponsorship sign-ups conducted on a dedicated website created by *Golf Digest* magazine. That included free one-year subscriptions. Another Iannacone innovation was sponsor-souvenir hole flags.

The result – 74 golfers, great golf, networking and camaraderie. Winners were:

Closest to Pin #3 – Bobby Winter, 4 ft. 2 in.

Closest to Pin #10 – Pete Halbert Byrne + Son, 3 ft. 6 in.

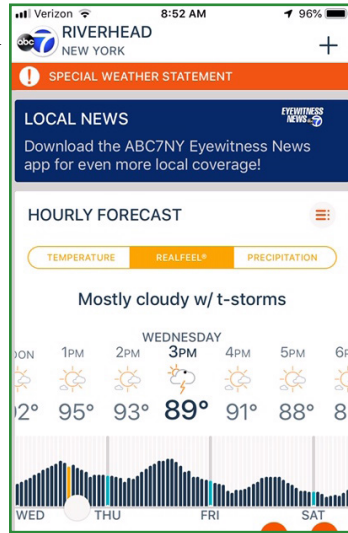
Longest Drive #12 – Daniel Friend

Winning Team-11 (58) – Cory Lillie, Larry Lillie, Dave Portocarrero, Mike Graham

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In 2020, it’s back to The Vineyards Golf Club on August 12 for another great day.



George Iannacone

# Flourish and Prosper; May the Water Flow

by Robert Boyle, IANY President



Robert “RB” Boyle

Wow, winterizing is upon us and another season soon will be behind us. The rainy spring made it tough to get work done and stay dry, but the hot, dry summer made up for it. There seemed to be an abundance of work for everyone this year.

Probably the biggest challenge for most business owners was finding good help. Unfortunately, that problem doesn’t look like it will go away anytime soon.

Technology has helped propel Wi-Fi into the irrigation industry. Wi-Fi controllers are “selling like hot cakes” as consumers are embracing what is quickly becoming the norm. But not to worry, smart products can never replace trained irrigation professionals who understand the importance of proper irrigation-system design, installation and maintenance. Irrigation best practices are like a tripod, if one leg is missing it would fall over.

As with any industry, there is so much to know about irrigation. Taking a close look, the IANY board members and associates have done an amazing job donating their time and expertise to further advance and create a better industry for all of us.

IANY board members have kept and continue to be key players and source of best practices for vital decisions to our water supply, local governments and related industries.

Without their hard work and dedication to improve our industry, business would be a whole lot harder, and maybe labor would not be the hardest part of running your business.

We all have busy lives and we work very hard in our businesses. And because we love this line of work, some days more than others, this is what we really enjoy doing. The more we put into our business and industry, the more we will benefit our businesses, industry, communities and customers. No pun intended, but flow your energy to IANY and help your business and our industry grow.

Look on our website, [www.IANY.org](http://www.IANY.org), for upcoming events, education and updates regarding legislation and much more.



# Government Affairs

by Luis Montes

In 2018-2109, the contractual relationship between the IANY and Long Island Government Relations & Communications (LIGR) concentrated on the municipal ordinance promulgated by Nassau County which seeks to regulate the certification of irrigation contractors, address some concerns by IANY members regarding license renewals and secure a seat in Commissioner of Consumer Affairs Greg May's advisory board.

To that end, LIGR at the request of IANY, set up meetings with the May and his counsel, Kenneth Heino, to address some of the questions and concerns that the ordinance had generated among IANY members. May stated at the meeting that he and his team were working on an implementation timeline which could extend 18 to 24 months. The new certification is part of a comprehensive review of all contracting licenses in Nassau County in which a new series of categories is expected to be enacted.

As a result of the meeting, LIGR at the request of IANY drafted a proposed certification framework modeled after the national Irrigation Association's and the recently adopted certification in New Jersey. Before the proposal was submitted to May, IANY members had a chance to review and comment on the document. All observations by IANY members were included in the final document that was submitted.



Luis Montes

Later in the year, IANY members were made aware of a new requirement to obtain the renewal of their Nassau County licenses dealing with lead certification. LIGR acting on behalf of IANY immediately contacted May and his team to address the concern.

At the meeting, May and his team explained that the issue of lead certification is one related to a federal legislation that was enacted in 2014-2015. However, May was open to review the requirement, and asked LIGR to consult with neighboring Suffolk County about its respective requirements. LIGR immediately contacted senior officials at the Suffolk County Department of Labor, Licensing & Consumer Affairs to inquire about its licensing requirements, and identified that such lead certification is not required for the Restricted Plumber License issued to irrigation contractors in Suffolk County. The information was immediately conveyed to Nassau County to be included in the review process of their requirements.

It was also noted during the meeting that an advisory board was recently formed to address the overhauling of the license system in Nassau County. Commissioner May appointed Rich Silverman, a board member of IANY, to that advisory board.

Based on the information collected during the meetings with May and the advisory board, IANY has requested to pursue an amendment to the current ordinance. A meeting with Nassau County legislative leaders is expected -- following the November electoral cycle -- to suggest changes to the enacting legislation.

*Luis Montes is a principal of Long Island Government Relations & Communications, which represents IANY's government-affairs interests.*



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# Through The Lens: 2019 IANY Golf Outing



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*Goddess of Hydration*



# Protecting Our Precious Water

by Mike Dwyer, CIC



Mike Dwyer

The chemical 1,4-dioxane is the emerging contaminant that many water districts on Long Island are going to begin removing from our drinking water. The state of New York is planning to require its removal in a very short time frame. The problem with this is time.

A pilot study of each individual well site begins the process. A test sample is sent out and run through a small version of proposed treatment system. The results are checked to make sure the contaminant is removed to the required levels and that any byproducts are able to be filtered out before the water is delivered to the public.

The pilot study findings and drawings for the treatment system are submitted to the state's health department for approval. The approval process takes months, after which construction can begin. Permits can be pulled, equipment can be ordered and digging will start. Water districts are ordering the AOP (Advanced Oxidation Process) Reactor

systems now. The manufacturer has an 18-month waiting line for delivery if ordered today. The Suffolk County Water Authority website has a drawing of this system and pictures of one that they are testing. The Bethpage Water District also has one AOP system that it is testing. Bethpage applied for the permit in 2013, built it and is still awaiting final approval to put it in service. It is tweaking the chemistry of the final water.

Why am I writing about this? Simple, when the governor signs this into law, it takes 90 days to become active. Once active, water districts cannot distribute water that does not meet the new guidelines. Wells will be shut off and irrigation will be not be allowed. Water districts are in a tough spot.

The state is setting the standard for the contaminant level, not the federal government which takes years to set the contaminant level. It gives you a proposed level after scientific study and a time frame of when it will become law in three to five years. This timeframe is given so everybody can get their water to meet the new guidelines. Most water districts on Long Island have at least one well that is impacted. There are 89 wells that will need treatment. In some districts, 50 percent of the wells need treatment; one lucky water district at this point shows no treatment is necessary.

*Continued on next page 9*



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Continued from page 8

Last month, I traveled to Albany with the Long Island Water Conference to put on the record the economic impact that banning irrigation will have on the Long Island Green Economy. We are hoping that this trip opened the eyes of the powers that be to allow a phased-in approach of this new treatment process.

This has been a very busy year with the Long Island Water Conference. We did some outreach training for New York American Water, and we are looking at continuing this with an emphasis on smart controllers. Programming is going to be the topic, to include brands and unique customer needs and how to solve them. I just had an update meeting on the OurWaterOurLives.com website. This is an effort by the Long Island Commission for Aquifer Protection (LICAP) to educate the public on water. The site has topics such as water-saving tips, what an aquifer is and a pledge to conserve.

Water is our Life. Use it wisely and make it last for your children's children.

# Tune Your Strategy to Be Ready for Whatever 2020 Brings

by Jeff Carowitz



Jeff Carowitz

With plenty of uncertainty about what will happen with the market and the economy in 2020, it's wise to take actions that will strengthen your business for the long haul.

Good times lull us into complacency. We stop challenging ourselves to do better. Even the best companies under-invest in long-range planning, and over-invest in status-quo overhead.

Here are a few things to think about when you're working on your 2020 strategy:

**Diversification lowers business risk while making you more valuable.** The old adage is to "not have all your eggs

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in one basket.” Now is a good time to broaden the range of products or services that your company offers.

Whether it is new opportunities in landscape lighting, landscape drainage, fertilizer application, holiday decorating or smart-water retrofits, there are many things that can be added to smooth out the slower weeks. It’s not easy, because you have to make the effort to learn and to market these products. Work on your plan!

**Be prepared to sell again.** In this era of contractors having “more work than we can handle,” I am seeing a bad trend in estimating: “the stealth bomber.” This is the contractor who drops by a property when the homeowner isn’t there – and then submits a quote for the work. If you do this, you’re selling yourself short. If the market tightens, you’ll need to relearn traditional selling:

- Meeting the client in person.
- Building trust and rapport.
- Answering questions.
- Providing brochures and a presentation packet.
- Asking for the order.

In today’s busy market, the first contractor to show up has the best chance of getting the work. It’s not just about being early – or prompt. The customer draws conclusions from your ability to schedule and follow through on an appointment quickly. You must be the kind of contractor who “has his act together.”

Has your selling approach become rusty and complacent? You’re better than that! Double your close rates quickly with a well-tuned presentation. You might need it.

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## Build an Effective Marketing Strategy

by Lorraine Hart



Lorraine Hart

There are many ways to market yourself and your company. Just as I am not going to tell you to take out a bunch of ads, I am not going to tell you to stop advertising if advertising is working for you. However, I will agree with the advertising reps in saying that if you are going to advertise, you need to commit to repeating your message enough to be noticed.

**Grow your service business.** Service accounts provide reliable income and stability. In helping retiring owners sell their irrigation business, there’s always one thing buyers want the most: the service accounts. The more service accounts you have = the more your company will sell for!

Growing a service business is much harder than following the overall market. You can’t just say “I want to grow my service business” and expect the customers to show up. You will need a marketing plan, a service-agreement plan and more. You’ll need to make strategic smart investments to capture accounts with targeted advertising. Maybe the “big guys” are already doing this in your market? Start now to capture service clients when your competitors are ignoring them.

**Learn the 3Rs for New Homeowners.** With boomers downsizing and millennials buying their old houses, there will be a lot of remodeling work ahead. Smart professionals are marketing the 3Rs: Renovations, Retrofits and Redesigns. You can help customers improve their existing landscapes, irrigation and lighting. But you’re going to need to use different marketing approaches and tools as these things don’t sell themselves.

Be ready for what the next year – and the next decade – bring.

*Jeff Carowitz leads a landscape industry strategic marketing agency. Find him on LinkedIn or at [Jeff@StrategicForceMarketing.com](mailto:Jeff@StrategicForceMarketing.com)*

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An important element in all marketing is branding to get yourself known, and to do enough repeat messages preferably by email newsletters so that your past, present and future clients and prospects will remember you.

Marketing to each of these groups is equally important. Sometimes your message might be the same for each, and other times you may have different messages for different groups. Although it is sometimes hard to believe, not all of our clients always remember that we are there to help them, so consistent communication is important.

Although the different venues for marketing are important, it is even more important that we ensure consistency in our “outflow.” Unfortunately, it is often the case that someone sends out one email, piece of mail or puts in one ad and then decides it doesn’t work because there is not an



immediate response. In a sense it's like expecting to get a marriage proposal after a first date. Sure, it can happen, but that usually isn't the way it works. Our promotional messages may need to be repeated enough so that the prospect starts to feel comfortable with us.

As the new year approaches, it's a good time to analyze the effectiveness of your marketing and to put a plan together for the upcoming year.

Take a good look at what marketing activities you did this past year, which actions were successful and what you would like to do in the upcoming year. If your business has been slow, it is important to repeat those actions which worked. Planning your marketing strategy and budget now will help your business run smoothly next year. Remember when working on your budget to include a contingency for unexpected expenses or an additional worthwhile marketing opportunity.

Reviewing your marketing plan is the first step in reaching your goals and growing your business in 2020. Marketing is not just about advertising - that is only a small part of your strategy. Other ways to effectively market your business may include emails, social media, updating your website and referral programs.

*Lorraine Hart, president of Ideal Consulting Services, can be reached at 516-382-0862 or lorraine@idealconsulting.net. Ideal Consulting is designer and host of IANY's website.*



## Did You Know We're Social?

by Krystle Schultz



Krystle Schultz

I am sure you have heard how important social media are for your business, but let me give you some statistics.

Here's a thought to take with you. Facebook estimates that 2.7 billion people use Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram or Messenger each month, and more than 2.1 billion people on average use at least one of

the Facebook family of services every day. You may be surprised to learn that the average Facebook user is age 40. And if you are up in the irrigation industry, that is your prime target: a 40-year-old who owns a home.

Basically, if you want to keep up with your competition you need to be on social media.

You may think that just posting a little here and there is going to get you results, but in order to be successful in social media, you need to be active, and by active I mean posting and engaging every day! And that is where you

come in. Please follow IANY's pages and comment. We currently have 100 followers on our IANY Facebook page. This page was created for you, so please take a look and use it to your advantage.

We also are involved in a LinkedIn group where you can network, share ideas and ask questions. Please visit this Contractor Common Interest Group <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4217028/>. I provide articles, upcoming events and industry information on the Facebook page and the LinkedIn group.

Please "like" and follow our pages on Facebook and LinkedIn. If you are new to social media, please do not hesitate to call or email me.

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*Krystle Schultz manages IANY's Facebook and LinkedIn pages, and manages marketing and social media for Rain Rich Sprinklers. She can be reached at krystlev22@yahoo.com or 631-697-0236.*



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