

# Extra! Extra! Free admission to newspaper museum!

Enamored of newsprint ephemera, history buff displays half-century of headlines, front pages, stories that stunned the world

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"Tragedy at Kent State," "Hitler Hopes for Peace," "Russians Fire Rocket at Moon." These are just some of the newspaper headlines found at the Memory Lane Museum in St. James.

Mike Tesoriero of Farmingville, who has been collecting newspapers since the 1960s, is the proprietor of what he believes is the first newspaper museum in the nation. Inside the building on Route 25, Tesoriero has displayed on the walls hundreds of newspapers showing all sorts of historic events. Many are from Newsday, the New York Post, the New York Daily News and The New York Times, with front-page stories ranging from the deaths of John Lennon and Richard Nixon to the many faces of Michael Jackson.

When asked why he began collecting newspapers, Tesoriero replied, "I like history." Having gathered over 400 papers, the Farmingville resident said he initially opened a museum in

Riverhead in 2007 but was unable to keep up with the rent after three months. So he contacted Gene Smith, whom he met several years ago at an antiques show, and Smith offered his building in St. James as the new location for Memory Lane.

"Without him, this wouldn't be here," Tesoriero said of Smith, who also collects memorabilia mostly from the Spanish-American War.

Tesoriero, who previously worked as a furniture salesman, said he has "always kind of fancied history" and deemed himself a "self-taught" historian. "After I got out of school, I realized how much I didn't know, so I began to read," he said, noting that he entered what he calls "free study" after graduating from Patchogue High School.

Since opening the St. James museum about a week ago, Tesoriero said operating the venue has become his full-time endeavor and encouraged community members to visit Memory Lane,



Photo by Jennifer Choi

Mike Tesoriero, founder of Memory Lane Museum in St. James.

which is open to the public from 2 to 8 pm every day except Tuesday and Wednesday. There is no admission charge, he said, but donations are certainly welcome.

Of the hundreds of newspapers displayed in the museum, the collector's favorites include the May 5, 1970 Daily News featuring the Kent State shootings when four students were killed by a member

of the Ohio National Guard, and the May 30, 1982 Newsday featuring a massive rape and robbery incident at Sea Crest Diner in Old Westbury. There is also a small section dedicated to papers containing stories about Osama bin Laden, Tesoriero said, because "I have such a grudge against him."

The next step in the museum's development, according to Tesori-

ero, will be establishing a board of directors of the four history and two science teachers required to develop an educational curriculum, which would enable local students to visit the museum as a class.

"If you like history, this is the place to be," Tesoriero said. Interested teachers may call 413-8881 for information.



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