

Waive fee to film at Tim's Shipwreck

Northport native making movie based on personal recovery from heroin addiction

By DAVID AMBRO

An aspiring Northport actress who has overcome heroin addiction has received a helping hand from the Northport Village Board with a project to produce a film inspired by her personal struggles during her first year trying to stay clean.

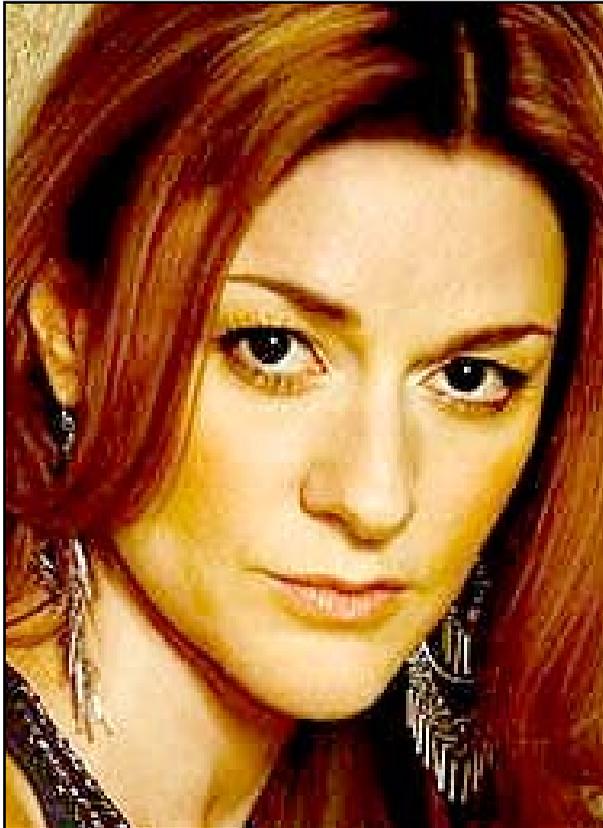
Marisa Vitali, a 1994 graduate of Northport High School, appeared before the Northport Village Board Tuesday, October 2 and explained her proposal to film *Miracle Year* at Tim's Shipwreck Diner over a three day period in November. She said that the production operation will require the use of two parking spaces during filming, and asked the Northport Village Board if it would consider waiving the \$1,000 permit fee so that she could put that money toward the cost of production.

"It's a story of hope," Ms. Vitali told the board. She said that she has raised the money for the project from her family and friends and by working an extra job, and she said waiving the permit fee would help her out financially with the project.

After listening to Ms. Vitali's story and asking her a series of questions about the details of the film shoot, Northport Village Mayor George Doll recommended waving the permit fee. He also recommended that the village facilitate getting Ms. Vitali in contact with the Northport-East Northport Drug and Alcohol Task Force to see if it can benefit from the film.

During an interview at Northport Village Hall prior to Tuesday's village board meeting, Ms. Vitali explained her film. She said it is not autobiographical, but that it is based on her experiences as a recovering addict. Ms. Vitali said that from the ages of 20 to 25, she was in treatment for heroin use, but that she has been clean for 10-and-a-half years now. She underwent residential treatment at Daytop Village Inc. substance abuse facility in Rhinebeck, New York then attended a day program at Daytop in Huntington Station.

Miracle Year will be a short film that Ms. Vitali intends to enter in film festivals. It is a story about a single mother in a custody battle for her daughter with her ex husband and as the head waitress at the Depot Diner she is struggling to stay clean as the court date approaches. "I wanted to write a film about recovery as opposed to addiction," Ms. Vitali said.



Marisa Vitali

Once the film is completed, Ms. Vitali hopes to make a connection with a not-for-profit organization to use the film in the fight against substance abuse. "I want to raise awareness about recovery so it is not taboo," she said.

Ms. Vitali said that she hopes to film the second week in November for three weekdays, either Monday to Wednesday or Tuesday to Thursday. She said that Tim Hess, owner of the Shipwreck Diner has been very supportive of the project and is allowing her full use of the diner.

She said that when her director and director of photography took one look at the Shipwreck "their jaws dropped." She said they don't intend to do anything special to prepare the interior because it is perfect the way it is. "Tim's Shipwreck Diner has an

old world charm that it can be past, present or future. That is one of the elements that make it special. Diner owner Tim Hess has been very supportive and we are all very excited to shoot there."

Ms. Vitali is a graduate of New York University who works as a television, film and off-Broadway theater actress. This will be the first short film she is producing. "This will be my first personal film. It has been a learning experience, which is always fun," she said.

During Tuesday's village board meeting, Ms. Vitali said that all of the filming will be done inside the diner or on the back patio and that the two parking spaces will be used for positioning of equipment. She said that she has walked through the project with Northport Police Chief Ric Bruckenthal and that she has notified the adjacent business owners about her intention.

Under questioning from village board members, it was established that she requires no police assistance with the production nor will any village employees be required. After the meeting, Northport Village Clerk Donna Koch said the village collects the \$1,000 fee for film productions to offset the cost of village employees. She said that given the fact that there are no village workers necessary for this film, and since it will not have any cost to the village accept the temporary use of the parking spots, that the village board decided to waive the fee.

At Tuesday's meeting, Chief Bruckenthal said Ms. Vitali was before the village board in May and it approved the project, but that filming was delayed. He said this is a renewal of the previous approval with a request to waive the fee. Chief Bruckenthal said he thinks the filming will cause minimal disruption in the village, but he did ask Ms. Vitali if she will be using the two parking spaces 24/7 once the filming begins.

Ms. Vitali said the spots will only be needed during the course of the filming each of the three days, but she did say that it will be for several hours in a row, from late afternoon to early evening.

Ms. Vitali will play the lead, Janice, in *Miracle Year*. She said Monday that she wrote an outline for the movie and from it the screenplay was written by Director Chris Ordal, a critically acclaimed independent filmmaker.

Eagle scout mission has patriotic objective

By COREY ADWAR

A Northport resident and member of Boy Scout Troop 410 is nearing completion of a memorial site and flagpole at Veterans Memorial Park in East Northport for his Eagle Scout project.

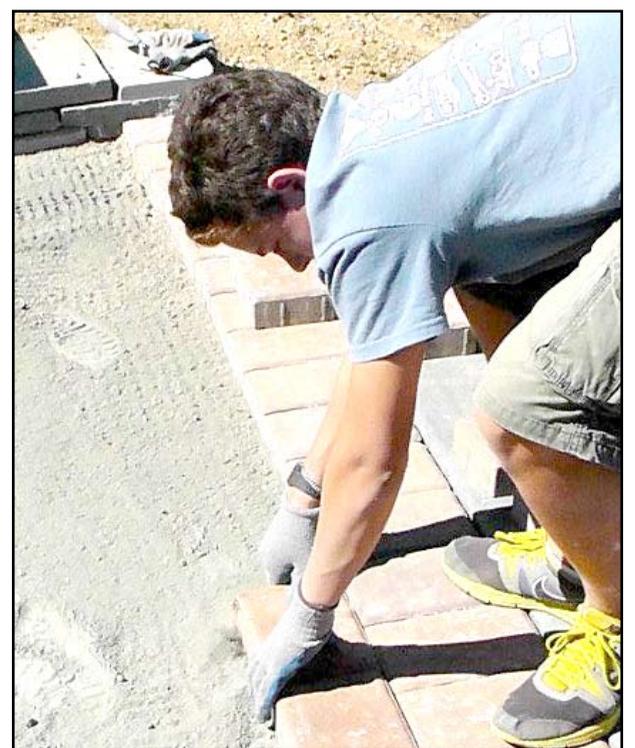
Jack Aiello, 14, first noticed there was no flagpole at Veterans

Memorial Park during the Pledge of Allegiance while attending his brother's football game September 11, 2011. Surprised that the park was lacking an American flag, he decided to make it the focus of his project, and he spent the next several months fundraising throughout the community.

Jack attended a meeting of

the Northport Lacrosse Club and discovered they had similar hopes for beautifying the park. He was grateful to receive \$3,000 in donations from the Northport Lacrosse Club to help fund the expenses of his project, while also receiving help from other athletic clubs using the park such as the

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SALUTE: Jack Aiello works on his Eagle Scout project at Veterans Memorial Park in East Northport.