

Massapequa Escape Artist
breaks free from jail
Page 3

Massapequa Sneaks Past
Freeport in Soccer Playoff
Game...Page 15

Obituaries
Henry Hein
Page

Massapequa Escape Artist breaks free from historical jail in minutes

by Joseph McArdle

In the end, it took Michael Lee only 17 minutes to break free from the numerous sets of handcuffs, padlocks and chains that had him locked up in jail. But this Massapequan wasn't incarcerated for a crime. Instead, the professional escape artist chose to have himself locked up on October 28th, the 80th anniversary of the death of another famous escape artist—Harry Houdini.

He chose for this venue, the historic jail cell in the basement of Old Town Hall at 47 West Main St., Babylon which was built in 1917 and recently placed back into public hands and carefully restored.

Lee was handcuffed under the inspection and view of several town officials and the public who were on hand to witness the event. He was then locked into the jail and given one hour to make his escape. Before a crowd of nearly 50 onlookers, he fought his way

(Continued on page 15)

In photo at right, Escape Artist Michael Lee is shown with Babylon official Wayne Horsley after he broke out of the old jail in the Historical Babylon Town Hall.



arts & entertainment

Escape Artist breaks free

Continued from page 3)

through the handcuffs and the jail cell's lock, the design, for which is still widely in use, in a little more than a quarter of the time allotted him.

"Nothing as advanced as these (lock and handcuffs) were used in Houdini's day," said a triumphant Lee after his escape. "I don't think anyone else would have been able to do this, and I don't think they would want to try," he added.

Lee is able to perform such feats thanks to 17 years of experience as an escape artist. His personal shows include not only escapes, but also mind-reading and illusion. For his next endeavor, Lee is looking for support from show business moguls to attempt an underground escape. He is prepared to be buried alive in a six-foot deep grave, and covered with six tons of rock and cement, a feat that has yet to be achieved by any escape artist to date.

The event at Old Town Hall, which was built in 1917 and only recently been placed back in public hands, was thanks largely to the backing of Councilman Wayne Horsley, chairman of the renovation committee restoring the building.

"If anyone could do magic, it was him," said Lee who contacted Horsley to get permission to perform the feat.

In addition to accepting Lee's proposal and organizing the event, Horsley was on hand to secure the chain and padlock on the cell before Lee could begin the process of his miracle escape.

"Not only was it good for Michael Lee, but it also draws attention to the building itself as being a part of the community," said Horsley following the event. "The building is of historic significance that has been lovingly restored, and is now in use and we want people to see it."

Lee reflected on the day's events.

"If those walls could talk, many of those who were incarcerated there would have been quite surprised at how quickly I escaped," he said.

