

# Baldwin HERALD



**ANDY RANDAZZO**  
*Designer a hit*

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Janine Bily/Herald

### A MOVING MEMORIAL

Rich Snyder, left, Christine Lee, Pat DiTillio, Laura Hetzel and her husband, Joe DiTillio, in front of Amore Mio Pizza in Baldwin, where a 9/11 tribute motorcycle was on display last

week. The bike is to be raffled off this month, and proceeds will be donated to victims' children.  
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## School musical director chosen

### Following Harrington's decision, Board of Ed says the show will go on

By RACHEL KALINA

Following months of students' and parents' expressions of concern about Kevin Harrington's decision not to return as the Baldwin School District's musical director, the Board of Education announced last week that the position

has finally been filled.

Gene Furman, an actor, director and choreographer, will take charge of the 2006-07 Baldwin High School musical. At the middle school, meanwhile, teachers Christine Simko and Barbara Maurer have agreed to share responsibility for upcoming productions there.

To the surprise and shock of many Harrington did not re-apply as play director toward the end of last year's school session. Harrington, who is also the Baldwin Middle School English chairman, never made any comment about his reasons for stepping down, but parents said that his decision was due in part to his heavy workload, and that he was seeking more support during the musical productions.

For years, Harrington had directed plays such as "Seussical the Musical" and "You're A Good

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# Baldwin ad agency a hit

## Local resident designs for big names like Sony and ESPN

BY RACHEL KALINA

Flipping through a magazine, you might find an ad for a Sony Ericsson product, a photo of a larger-than-life motorcycle. It is accompanied by an understatement of a quote: "Training wheels?"

This ironic ad is just one of a handful designed by Baldwin resident Andrew Randazzo, who, after spending the past decade in Los Angeles working for advertising companies with big-name clients, returned last year to launch his own advertising, marketing and design agency, called Hitstate.

In addition to his Sony Ericsson ads, Randazzo, a Baldwin native, has an impressive resume. He designed a press kit for a premiere of the movie "Spider-man" in Los Angeles, a Web site for the Game Show Network and print ads for Fred Joaillier jewelry. Randazzo regularly caters to clients around the country, and he has worked with companies both big and small. He has a portfolio full of projects that includes names like Sony, ESPN and the Food Network.

"I come from a long line of artists," Randazzo, 34, said of his creative nature and his background in fine arts.

He received a degree from the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan, but his roots in Los Angeles were planted 10 years ago, when he visited a friend in California. He ended up going on job interviews while he was there, and started working for an advertising and design agency. A few years later, Randazzo decided to start his own company and move back to the East Coast to be with his relatives. "I have a big family," he explained, which includes his wife and two sons.

The company's name refers to a bit of Web site design jargon; with a "hit state" being the area on a Web page that one clicks with a mouse.

The Baldwin native said that art flows in his blood, and that he can even trace his artistic ancestry back to the 1500s, when a great-grandfather painted the walls of a church in Sicily. The tradition has continued through more recent generations, Randazzo explained: His grandfather did artistic work for Life magazine, and his father was also an artist.

"I'll be damned if my children do anything but," Randazzo joked, referring to his 2- and 4-year-old children. "When they're kids, they always draw and stuff. They just have to be happy with what they do. They may have talent and they may not, [but] it hasn't really skipped a generation."

As the owner and creative director of Hitstate, Randazzo keeps himself occupied with graphic design, and he has had to teach himself programs like Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator in order to keep pace with a rapidly changing industry. "Technology moves really fast," he said. "Ten years ago I wouldn't have needed to know anything about computers and software. Now I have to come up with ideas, design them and sometimes produce them."

Randazzo said he does a great deal of "branding" for companies, which basically means giving them an identity or updating a previous one, through the use of Web sites, print ads, logos and other mediums. Whether it means more eye-catching colors and a simpler logo for Columbia TriStar Pictures or a flashier, up-to-date look for the Game Show Network Web site, Randazzo is

there to see that the projects progress from the drawing board to their conclusion.

"I've done a lot of branding," he said. "That's the thing I do best. That's taking a company from nothing and turning it into something, or rebranding and giving a company a new look, or giving a company a makeover."

When a company approaches Randazzo with a need to brand itself or a specific product, Hitstate pinpoints a market and determines what its consumers like. The company keeps colors in mind, and whether those consumers want something young or old, classy or cutting edge. "Within [the branding process] is everything from television commercials and logo designs to brochures and broadcast design," Randazzo said.

Although he does most of his work in Baldwin, he has three salespeople in Los Angeles, Chicago and New York. He also has three staff designers.

His list of handpicked clients includes Columbia TriStar Pictures, which ended up firing their original advertising-design agency in favor of Hitstate, Randazzo said. Other recognizable names he has worked with include ESPN and Twentieth Century Fox. While Randazzo handles his bigger clients exclusively, he works with smaller ones, too. This has led to a collection of clients in Utah, Florida, Arizona, Vermont and Los Angeles, among others.

"I like to meet with people face to face," Randazzo said of starting a project with a client, "whether I fly to L.A. or Chicago."

He said he is an artist at heart, but had to become more business-oriented in order to support his artistic endeavors. In the end, he said, he knew graphic art would pay for itself. "Whether I do a painting, drawing,



**BALDWIN RESIDENT**  
Andrew Randazzo launched his own advertising, marketing and design agency last year.

sculpture, product design or magazine design logo," Randazzo said, "it doesn't really matter what it is, as long as it's creative."

He hopes to use his creativity for the betterment of Baldwin, and would like to be a part of designing a new scenic identity for the community. "I'm trying to get on the committee for the downtown revitalization project," Randazzo said, referring to plans by the Town of Hempstead to rejuvenate Grand Avenue. "I was born and raised in Baldwin. I love Baldwin."

With this hopeful side project as a goal, Randazzo still has plenty to keep him busy in his day job - like the national TV commercial on which he's currently working. But that's fine with him. "I come to work, nine to five, not hating my life," he said, "I enjoy it because it's creative."

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