

HIGH PROFILE

Gordon Herr: Balancing Democracy and Community

BY TODD SHAPIRO

When you learn that Gordon Herr serves as both the Chairman of the Southampton Town Democratic Committee and as an Assistant Commissioner with the Suffolk County Board of Elections, it's easy to assume his world revolves entirely around politics. You'd be half right. Gordon takes his civic duties seriously, but his life, as it turns out, extends far beyond the political arena. Originally from Zambia, then known as Northern Rhodesia, Gordon also spent time in Zimbabwe and Cape Town, South Africa. In early 1980, he left Southern Africa and traveled to Kenya, Egypt and Israel and then extensively throughout Scandinavia and Europe, arriving in New York City, December 1980. "I left with my then wife during a turbulent time in South Africa. We expected there to be a bloody revolution – we never expected that the miracle of Nelson Mandela being released from prison and becoming president, would ever happen!" Both became U.S. citizens in 1985 during the Statue of Liberty rededication ceremony and were sworn-in as citizens on Ellis Island with 200 other new citizens, by then Chief Justice Warren Burger. Gordon is writing a book "From the Bush to the Beaches," which describes his early life in Africa and his journey from Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, to New York City and then finally, Southampton! By education, Gordon has a degree in electrical engineering and a graduate degree in business. Before entering politics, he founded and operated a number of sales and marketing organizations. He has chaired the Southampton Town Democratic Committee for 18 years, guiding the local party from its quieter beginnings to becoming the dominant political force in the Town. "It's a passion of mine, but not my only one," he says with a smile. "The work we do matters. It's not always fun, but it's meaningful. When I started, people were afraid to say they were Democrats, but not anymore!" Beyond Democratic poli-

tics, Gordon's impact is felt County-wide through his position at the Suffolk County Board of Elections.

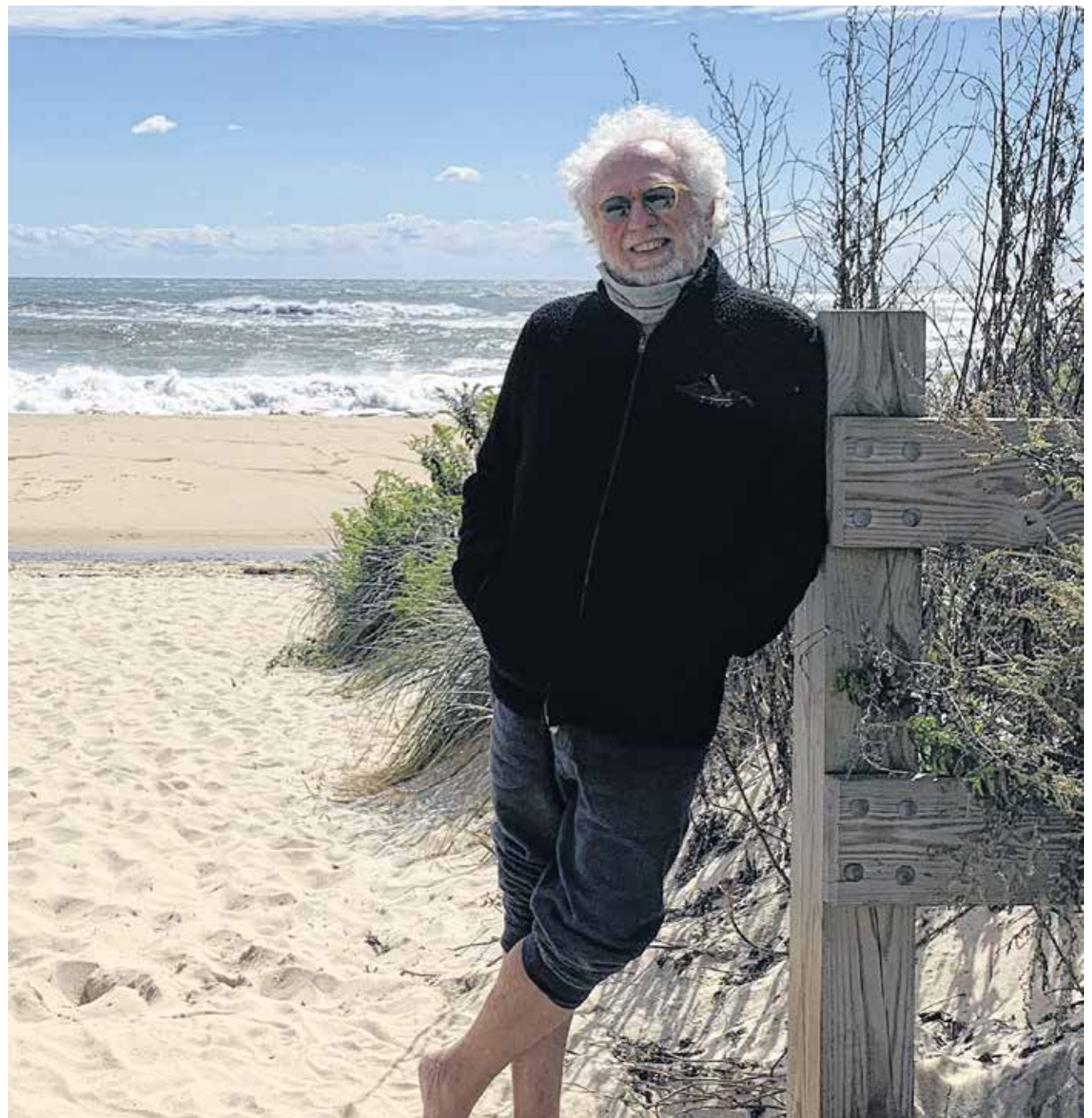
"As an assistant commissioner, I'm honored to be part of the electoral process," he explains. Each county in the nation has its own Board of Elections, and Suffolk is among the largest in New York State. Gordon's fascination

with people and ideas is boundless. "In both my roles, I meet people from every walk of life," he says. "I'm naturally curious, and that curiosity has given me a wide circle of friends. My interests go well beyond politics." Gordon speaks fondly of the region that has become home. "I love the beaches, the ocean, the bays and waterways," he says. "The natural environment and water is something we cherish and must protect, including our drinking water. Our 1999 Southampton Town Comprehensive Plan says it best: 'This rural character, graced with significant natural and historical resources, is the quality that maintains its vitality as a resort, second home and visitor attraction, and an attractive place to live and work.' To Gordon, environ-

mental stewardship and community responsibility are intertwined.

"We're all guardians for the future," he reflects. "We have a shared responsibility to protect the land and water that sustain us." Most people think of the Hamptons in the spring and summer," Gordon says, "but there's magic here year-round. Whether you come in autumn or the quiet of winter, there's always something to discover." For Gordon, life on the East End represents the balance between civic duty, community connection, and the serenity of coastal living, a reminder that leadership doesn't end at the ballot box; it begins at home.

Todd Shapiro is an award-winning publicist and associate publisher of Dan's Papers.



GORDON HERR, TOWN OF SOUTHAMPTON DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN OCTOBER 2025