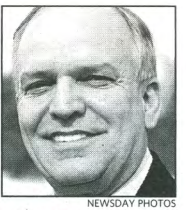

NEWSDAY PHOTOS

Rosanne Freda urged Mayor Allan Dorman to list jobs on Islandia's Web site.

Government for the people in Islandia

THE COLUMN
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Long Island's unemployment numbers are at their highest in years. Residents are losing jobs, behind on mortgage payments, cutting back on spending. In short, everybody's hurting.

And yet municipalities keep raising taxes and fees, and school districts keep signing off on overly generous union contracts. Which means hard-pressed residents are getting harder pressed all the time.

It's enough to fuel yet another rant about the cruel disconnect between those who govern and those who are governed. But then, something wild like this happens:

To: Allan Dorman
Subject: Job list

Hello Mayor Dorman,

I was wondering if you would consider job postings at the Village Web site? Any Islandia resident could post there for jobs they may need to fill. Maybe something that would be helpful to people in these difficult times and a good way for employers to find qualified workers. Like me! Looking for a part-time job :)

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of the residents.

Rosanne Freda

Freda, who moved from Westbury to Islandia about a year ago, sent that e-mail to Mayor Allan Dorman in January. Freda, 55, doesn't know where she got the job bank idea. For months, she's been looking for a part-time job "out of desire and out of necessity in these hard times," she said.

Four years ago, when she and her husband were still living in Westbury, she sold her specialized bookkeeping business. She's been trying to build an online pet food business.

"My husband is working, but we've been cutting back like everybody else, buying less and eating meals at home." she said. "I know they want everybody to start spending money and build the economy, but nobody I know is comfortable doing that."

She said she wrote Dorman because she knows other people in the community are looking for jobs, too.

"I thought it was a terrific idea," Dorman said Friday. "So I checked with the village attorney to see if there was any problem, and he said no, so we went to a company that could do the work of adding it to our Web site."

Dorman also found time to fire off an e-mail to Freda, saying her idea was good to go. She found time to fire right back:

To: Allan Dorman
Subject: RE: Job list

Great! Glad you think it to be a good idea. I'm available to help if you may need. Very good with clerical — detail — organizing.

Thanks again!
Rosanne Freda

On Feb. 19 — weeks after receiving Freda's note — Dorman told her the site was under development. Eight days later, the village announced "a new online job listings directory . . . to provide assistance to village residents and businesses in filling job positions and obtaining employment in these difficult economic times."

Last week, the site was live and awaiting its first job listings.

"I was totally surprised," Freda said. "The mayor was quick to tell me it was a good idea, and a few weeks later, the job listing is a reality. I'm not used to governments acting like that."

A spot check of other municipalities turned up no similar listings, which means Islandia's could be a first.

"The listing is a great idea and I hope more municipalities do it," said Bill Heather, of Right Management Consultants in Melville, an outplacement firm. Handled correctly, he said, a community job listing on a municipal Web site could make it easier for some to look for work.

"It's people helping people, neighbors helping neighbors," he said, noting that some job seekers find calling contacts and networking difficult. "It comes with a whole lot of credibility, legitimacy, trustworthiness."

Duffy Spencer of Westbury, a life coach and psychotherapist, offered a more expansive view.

"That's a very smart village," she said. "The economy gives us a chance to . . . band together to help each other, to work as communities in a nation that has a history of rugged individualism."

The small village of 3,200 covers just 2.4 square miles. Most of its residents are blue-collar, Dorman said.

He predicted that the job listing would include part-time and some blue-collar jobs, too.

"It's going to help," he said. "That's why we did it."

And for that, Freda — who said she has yet to meet the mayor in person — was glad.

To: Allan Dorman
Subject: Re: Job Listing

Wow! That's great! I'm sure lots of people will be happy about it. Thanks for making it happen.