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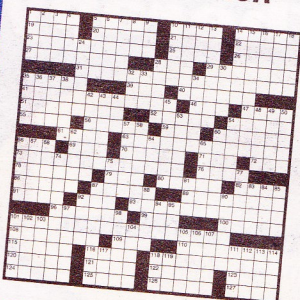
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At left: King and Queen, Frank Zito and Rose Laccone of Levittown and Rose Laccone of Whitestone

Searching For A Savvy Senior

BY MARLO JAPPEN

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Frank Rizzo, 83, of Levittown donned a golden crown and a red velvet robe as he was named the "Savvy Senior King" of 2013. Soon, he will make another senior citizen feel like royalty as he crowns this year's winner at the Parker Jewish Institute on Sept. 7.

The Association of Generational Experts for Seniors (AGES) recognizes seniors who make a difference in their community. Among the twenty-six nominees, Rizzo was chosen as "Savvy Senior King" last Sept. at the Holiday Inn in Plainview.

"I was very surprised and elated," Rizzo said. "I never realized I did so much... it was a very emotional thing for me."

Rizzo was recognized for his long-term commitment to charity work. He serves as the chairman of the board

for the Long Island Society for Italian Americans, an organization that gives out 3 scholarships a year to students who display excellence in the Italian language. He also volunteers as an usher at St. Bernard's Church and is a member of The Young Friends, an organization where he and other seniors take orphaned children out on daytrips. Rizzo has also helped out with Meals on Wheels through the Fulton Street Seniors Program in Brooklyn.

In 1952, Rizzo was drafted in the Korean War and reached the rank of a sergeant. After his service, he joined the Knights of Columbus where he engaged in charity work for children with special needs. During the holidays, Rizzo enjoys portraying Santa Claus for these children.

"It was wonderful to see them laugh and smile," Rizzo said. "They were happy when they got the smallest present."

Upon receiving his crown, Rizzo was

awarded with a gift certificate toward professional studio portraits.

"My wife and I went and we posed for the picture 3 or 4 months later," he said. "It was a beautiful portrait."

Rizzo looks forward to this year's crowning ceremony.

"There are a lot of worthy seniors that should be recognized," he said. "You've got the sitters and the doers and these people are the doers. They have compassion for fellow human beings that aren't in good shape."

AGES is accepting nominations for "Savvy Senior Citizens" through Sunday, August 31.

In 200 typed words or less, individuals can nominate a senior and send a photo or video to: AGES Savvy Senior Award, AGES P.O. Box 774, Melville, NY 11747. Nominations are also accepted via email at savvy2014@agesresourcenetwork.com or directly through AGES' Website, www.agesresourcenetwork.com.