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More History on LI Roadways

*Howard Kroplick
Co-Authors
The Rise of the
'Motor Parkway'*

By Joe Scotchie

Last year, East Hills resident Howard Kroplick authored *Vanderbilt Cup Races of Long Island*, a history of motor races that captured the nation's imagination.

On the strength of that book, Kroplick, along with Al Velocci, has co-authored *The Long Island Motor Parkway*, a picture history of the parkway that became the first paved road built exclusively for automobiles and was the forerunner of the modern highway system.

In addition to giving readers fascinating snapshots at life in Long Island at the turn of the 20th century, the book, according to its authors, hopes to "further promote a better understanding of how automobiles and parkways significantly changed the lives of Long Islanders during the 20th century."

The parkway was first constructed in 1908. And so, the centennial of that event was the major inspiration behind the research and writing of this volume.

"Features such as the use of reinforced concrete, bridges to eliminate grade crossings, banked curves, guardrails and landscaping were all pioneered by the parkway," the authors said. "A portion of the road was also used



Howard Kroplick

from 1908 to 1910 as the course for the historic Vanderbilt Cup Races. These races brought crowds to up to 250,000 people to Long Island to view America's first international road races."

In addition to the text, *The Long Island Motor Parkway* includes more than 200 rare images. The authors collected them from a variety of sources, including the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum, Garden City Archives, and the Smithtown Library.

"This book will appeal to fans of Long Island and automotive history illustrating the evolution of transporting goods and people from the horse-drawn era to the automobile era," the authors note. "Readers will enjoy the images of how the Long Island Motor Park-



Al Velocci

way was built and developed and how Long Islanders lived, dressed, and enjoyed such social events as the Vanderbilt Cup Races on the Parkway. Now and then images will show the dramatic transformation of areas around the Long Island Motor Parkway over the last 100 years."

More specifically, the book, as its authors claim, will further illustrate how the parkway transformed Long Island from rural farmland into a "sprawling suburbia," plus its role in the annals of automobile racing and the development of American roads in general.

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History on LI Roadways (continued from page 1)

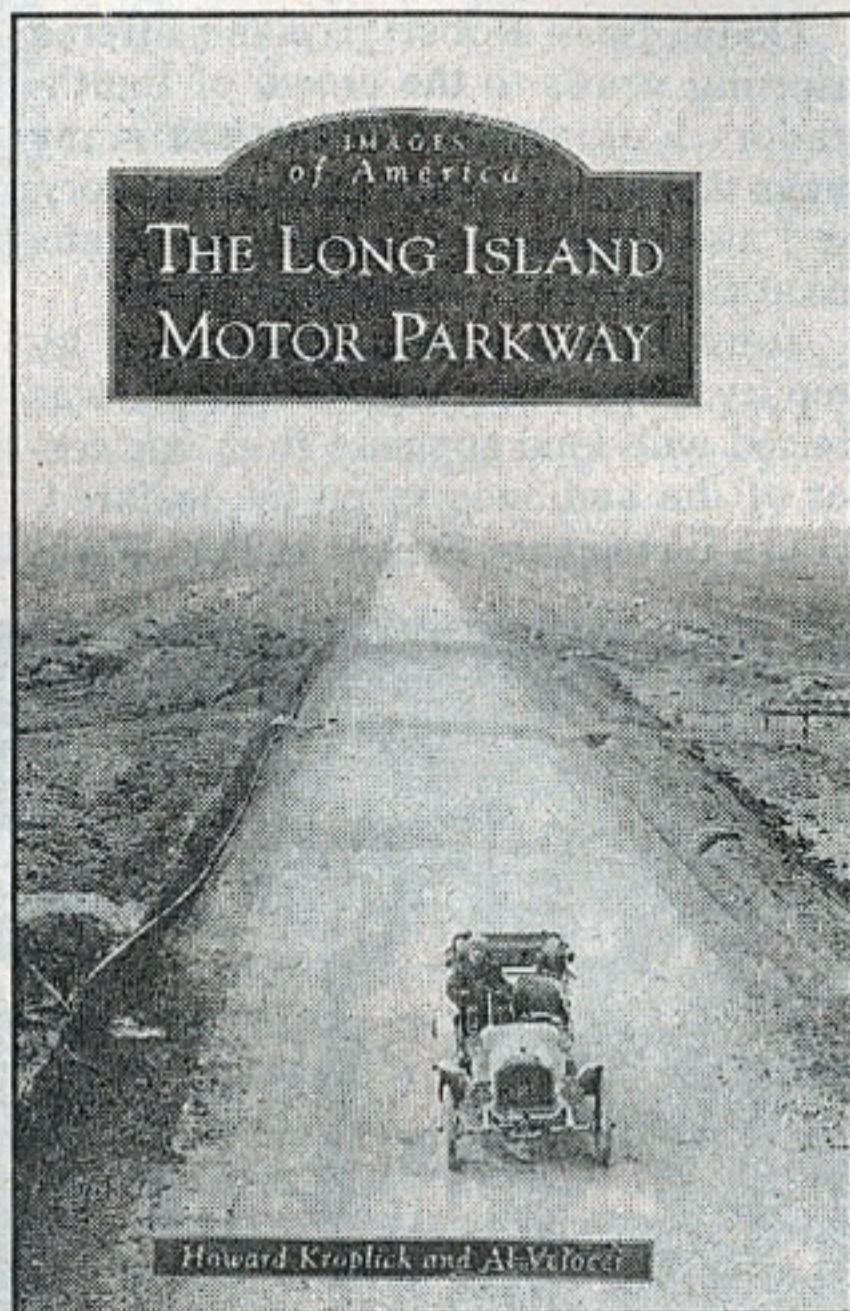
the lives of Long Islanders during the 20th century," the authors continued. "We hope the book will reinforce the pioneering contributions made by William K. Vanderbilt Jr. in the development of American roads and automobiles."

The book continues Howard Kroplick's longtime interest in the Vanderbilt Cup Races. He has lectured extensively on those races and is a research volunteer at the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum. Kroplick is also a member of the Vanderbilt Cup Race Centennial Committee and the Long Island Motor Parkway Panel. His exhibits of the Vanderbilt Cup Races have been shown at various museums, including the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum, the Cradle of Aviation, and the Nassau County Museum of Art.

A resident of New Hyde Park, Al Velocci has also published extensively on Long Island roadways. He has been a research volunteer at the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum since 1998 and is also a member of the Long Island Motor Parkway Panel. In common with William K. Vanderbilt Jr., Al has been a sports car racer himself.

As with Kroplick's previous book, *The Long Island Motor Parkway* is published by Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, SC.

All author royalties of the book are being donated to the Roslyn-based CAPS



The dust jacket for *The Long Island Motor Parkway*.

(Child Abuse Prevention Services.)

On Thursday, Oct. 30th, both Howard and Al will be at the Book Revue in Huntington for a joint book signing event. The event will start at 7 p.m. The bookstore is located at 313 New York Ave.