

SUIT OVER CESSPOOL FATALITY

■ Family seeks \$50M in worker's Huntington death

■ Claims negligence by town, firms, homeowner

BY LAURA BLASEY

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The family of a worker killed in a May 2017 cesspool accident has filed a wrongful-death suit, seeking \$50 million in damages.

The suit, filed Friday in Suffolk County Supreme Court, claims negligence by the worker's employer, its contractors, the Town of Huntington's highway department and the owner of the home where the accident took place.

Edward Sinnott, 59, of Huntington, was killed when the edge of a cesspool pit he was installing in Huntington collapsed, knocking him into the hole and suffocating him under a large mound of earth. Sinnott, who worked for Don Antorino Sewer & Drain, was pronounced dead at the scene.

According to police at the time, the company was hired by a general contractor, Antorino & Sons, which is also named in the suit.

Susan Karten, an attorney representing Sinnott's family, said the family was devastated and remained distressed by the circumstances of Sinnott's death.

OSHA fined both companies for "serious" safety violations in the incident, including not providing adequate protective systems for employees engaging in cesspool installation, according to its website. Don Antorino Sewer & Drain's violation is being contested, according to OSHA records.

Don Antorino Sewer & Drain didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

A woman who answered the phone at Antorino & Sons denied that the company had been sued and declined comment.

The suit claims that Sinnott and other workers at the scene were not asked to wear harnesses or use safety lines while working on the cesspool, and they were not provided with hard hats. The equipment used was also too large for the project and the hole was improperly supported and located, the suit says.

The suit also claims the Town of Huntington and the homeowner Dane Kouttron — a construction superintendent with experience in safety and oversight, according to the complaint — were aware of "repeated and chronic" flooding, water drainage and other problems that created "hazardous" conditions, such as unstable ground. But they failed to address the issues, the suit said.

Kouttron declined to comment, saying, "We don't know anything about it."

A.J. Carter, a spokesman for the Town of Huntington, said the town does not comment on pending lawsuits.

Sinnott's family is also calling for an investigation by the county district attorney's office. Karten said the family believes that other workers may be at risk, citing the death of another Long Island man during the installation of a cesspool in Shoreham in November.

Suffolk County District Attorney Timothy Sini's office declined to comment.

With Ellen Yan

For pair, good



Maria Escobar and Jose Hernan Guevara Amaya with their triplets Katy, Alison and Steven on Friday at

Sewer upgrade finished

BY SOPHIA CHANG

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Northport officials celebrated the completion of the village's sewer upgrade and wastewater treatment project Friday.

The project's last phase was a yearlong effort to replace two deteriorating cast iron sewer lines measuring eight inches in diameter that ran under Woodbine Avenue and along the Northport Harbor shoreline. Those pipes have been replaced by a single 12-inch-diam-

eter pipeline made of high-density polyethylene.

"The old system is 85 years old, and it was collapsing. The pipes were actually turning into graphite like a pencil, and we needed to replace it before that happened," said Northport trustee Damon McMullen, the village's commissioner of wastewater treatment system who led the project, at a news conference in Scudder Park. "This literally was done in the nick of time."

McMullen said the old pipe's locations under a road

and water presented special challenges. "If either collapsed you'd have major pollution. You could have lost a piece of the road along Woodbine Avenue," he said.

The pipe replacement project also took special pains to minimize its effect on the harbor, McMullen said. "One of the major things we did do was directional drilling underneath the harbor, so that way we wouldn't be disturbing the bottom and have the least impact on the environment," he said.

Northport began the sewer

things come in 3s



BY LAURA BLASEY
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Two is company and three's a crowd — unless you're the lucky parents of Nassau University Medical Center's newest set of triplets.

Maria Escobar, 32 and Jose Hernan Guevara Amaya, 33, of Hicksville, welcomed a set of triplets at NUMC in East Meadow on Wednesday. Along with hospital staff, they celebrated not only the arrival of their first children, but a successful end to a difficult journey, as triplet pregnancies are challenging and uncommon.

The birth marked the first set of triplets delivered at NUMC since July 2016.

The trio was conceived naturally and delivered by Caesarean section at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, and weighed 4 pounds each — “For triplets, that's a pretty healthy weight,” said Dr. Victor Politi, president and CEO of the hospital.

Escobar and Amaya said Friday they were thrilled to meet their new family, a fraternal set of girls, Katy and Alison, and their brother, Steven. The babies are healthy, but spending some time in the neonatal intensive care unit because of their size.

“I'm very thankful for the team here,” Amaya said in Spanish through a translator.

Escobar laughed when asked if she was thinking about more children.

Hospital officials said there

was a triplet boom in the 1990s, but in the last 20 years, the boom subsided. While in vitro fertilization tends to yield more cases, naturally conceived triplets are less common. Dr. John Riggs, chairman of OB-GYN at the hospital, said naturally conceived sets only occur in 1 in 10,000 births.

“This was a very remarkable experience we went through,” Riggs said. “Without this team effort, we wouldn't have such a successful outcome.”

Triplets are almost always born around a month or two early. They also usually come with complications for both the babies and the mother, Riggs said, and doctors initially thought they lost Escobar's babies at 16 weeks.

Escobar suffered what's known as an incompetent cervix, in which the weight and pressure of carrying three babies at once caused the cervix to open up and begin labor prematurely. It was a frightening moment, both the family and the doctors said: 50 percent of all cases lead to the loss of the pregnancy and the condition leaves mothers at high risk for serious infection.

The staff at NUMC were able to save the babies in surgery and Escobar carried until 36 weeks, a week short of full term.

“It's a very happy day for us here,” Politi said. The mom and dad are “looking forward to many, many happy years with their three new children.”

HOWARD SCHNAPP

Nassau University Medical Center. ■ Video: newsday.com/nassau

in 'nick of time'

upgrade and wastewater treatment project in 2013 as part of a mandate from a 2003 agreement among New York, Connecticut and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to improve water quality in the Long Island Sound region. Northport officials were required to reduce the sewer treatment plant's nitrogen output to 10 pounds or less per day.

In the first two project phases, the village upgraded its sewer treatment plant at Scudder Beach, relined sewer mains

and rehabilitated manhole covers to prevent groundwater and storm water from entering the sewer system.

The pipe replacement phase cost \$5.8 million, with more than \$5 million paid for with state funding. “This is the perfect example of government that works together,” village Mayor George Doll said Friday.

The village will continue work on improving the water quality in the harbor by bringing dozens of homes along the harbor onto the sewer system, McMullen said.



Trustee McMullen and Sen. Carl Marcellino at Northport ceremony.

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CORRECTIONS

Admission to Sunday's Mineola Choral Society concert is \$25. The fee was incorrect in Friday's exploreLI.

Doreen Ferretti's husband is the great-nephew of Nassau GOP chairman Joseph Mondello. A story Wednesday mischaracterized the relationship.

THIS DATE IN HISTORY

1943 Some 50 bombers struck Wilhelmshaven in the first all-American air raid against Germany during World War II.

1945 During World War II, Soviet troops liberated the Nazi concentration camps Auschwitz and Birkenau in Poland.

1951 An era of atomic testing in the Nevada desert began as an Air Force plane dropped a one-kiloton bomb on Frenchman Flat.

1967 Astronauts Virgil I. “Gus” Grissom, Edward H. White and Roger B. Chaffee died in a flash fire during a test aboard their Apollo spacecraft.

1984 Singer Michael Jackson suffered serious burns to his scalp when pyrotechnics set his hair on fire during the filming of a Pepsi-Cola TV commercial at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles.

2008 Former Indonesian President Suharto, a U.S. Cold War ally whose military regime killed hundreds of thousands of left-wing opponents, died in Jakarta at 86.