

From Soda to Scrap: Sam Gershowitz'

50 YEARS WITH GERSHOW RECYCLING



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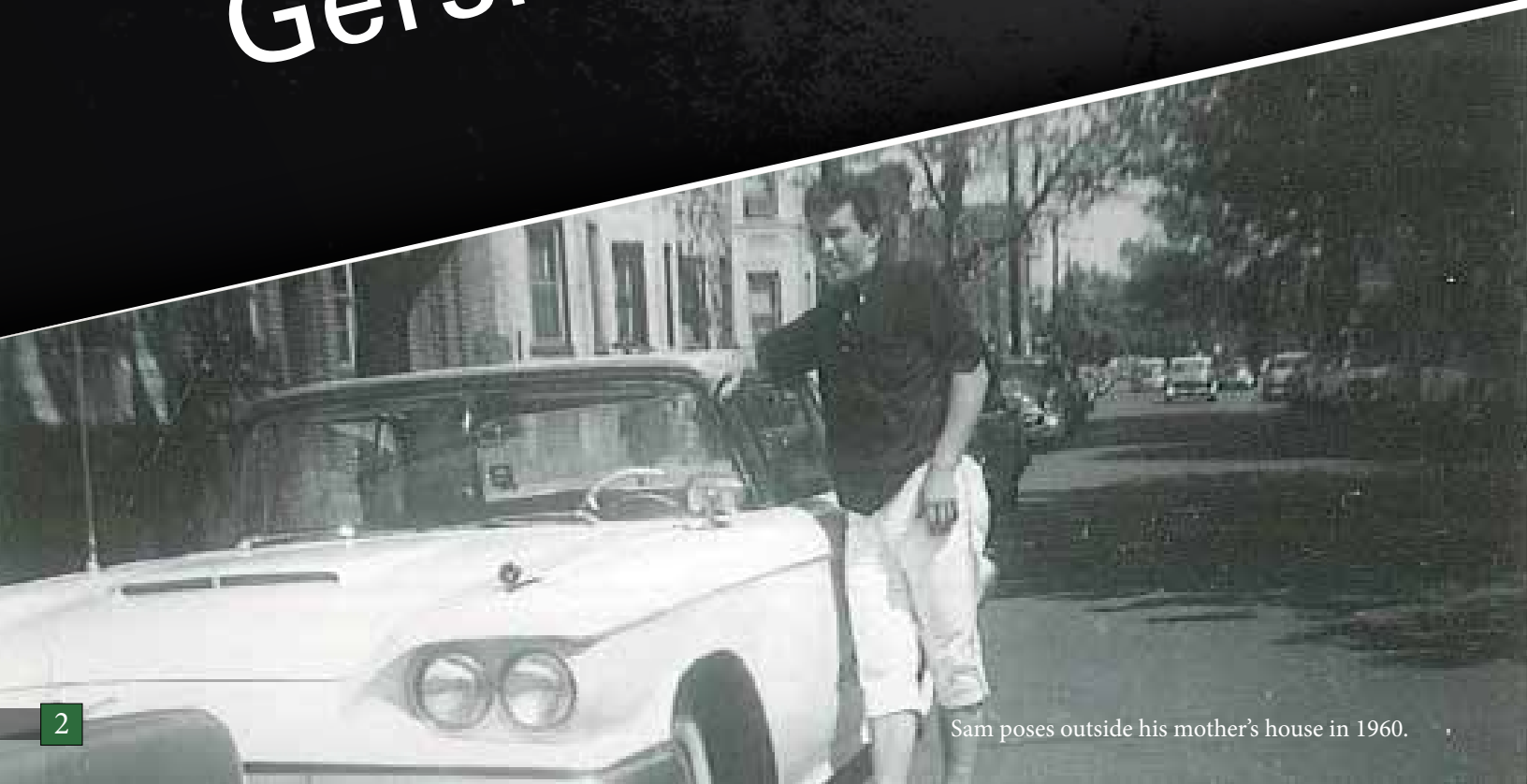


50th
GERSHOW
RECYCLING
1964 Anniversary 2014

From Soda to Scrap: Sam Gershowitz' 50 Years with Gershow Recycling



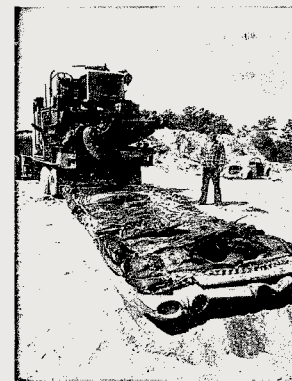
Tractor trailer used by Gershow to haul scrap around 1965.



Sam poses outside his mother's house in 1960.

Newsday/Long Island

Crusher Flattens Junk Car Problem



Crusher flattens vehicles to six inches

By Tom Incantalupo

Smithtown—A mobile device that crushes junk automobiles into six-inch slabs is being used to get rid of the 600 cars a year that are abandoned in the town.

The device is the first of its kind in use in Suffolk County, according to Duane Rhodes, town superintendent of sanitation. It is owned by a private wrecking firm, Gershow Auto Wreckers of Central Islip, which charges the town nothing to crush the wrecks and haul them away, Rhodes said. The only money the firms gets, he said, comes from the sale of the scrapped cars.

The engine blocks, tires and upholstery are removed before the cars are crushed. The crushed autos are taken to a plant in New Jersey where they are shredded and sold to be melted down and reused.

"These junk cars are plaguing the communities," Rhodes said. "Not only are they an ugly eyesore, but they're a fire hazard and a health hazard. We've chased as many as 35 or 40 people a day who were scavenging cars, and we've called the fire department several times after kids set fire to the cars. Our main aim is to get them out of there, fast."

Moved From Dump

The cars used to be stored at the Kings Park dump site, but when excavation work began there there was no longer room for them and they were moved to a place behind the Sanitation Department's headquarters on Lake Avenue. An-

other junk dealer, who used to truck them away, found it inconvenient to come to the new site, and Rhodes was forced to search for a new wrecking firm, he said.

Other towns also reported some difficulty with abandoned cars and in finding ways to get rid of them. In Brookhaven, cars are picked up by town trucks and hauled to the dump in Hollisville, according to Harold Malknes, superintendent of highways.

400 Cars Brought In

"Junkies don't want them because by the time we get them there's nothing left," Malknes said. He said that about 400 cars a year are brought into the dump, many of them from roadside deathbeds where owners abandoned them. "I don't know why they do it this way," Malknes said. "They could get at least \$5 or more from a junk dealer."

In Huntington, "several hundred" cars are removed free of charge each year by junk dealers called in by the town, which scores the wrecks near its incinerator, according to Donald Dilworth, director of the town's code compliance bureau. "Junk cars no longer have any value," he said. "All the junkie can use is some copper from the radiator. We really have to press to get them to come and take cars away."

But in Babylon, Deputy Sanitation Superintendent Vernon Carpenter said the junk dealers, who are paid by the town to remove the automotive corpses, haul them away almost as fast as they are abandoned. He could not say how many cars a year are towed or how much the junk dealers are paid.

Newsday article describing Sam extracting vehicles from the Smithtown landfill dated June 1, 1971.

It was the year 1968. A young man named Sam Gershowitz had just extracted every junk car from the Brookhaven Town landfill and wanted to do the same thing in Smithtown. He met with a man named Duane "Dusty" Rhodes, town superintendent of sanitation, and told him he would pay the town \$1 for each car he removed from the landfill.

"I met with Dusty and he showed me a mountain of cars," Sam said. "He asked me what I was going to do with all these cars, then he realized who I was. 'You're the guy who cleaned up Brookhaven,' he said to me. 'You want them?' I said, 'That's why I'm here.'"

Rhodes later spoke to John Klein, who was the Smithtown town supervisor at the time. “[Klein] asked him, ‘Is this some kind of scam? I want to meet this maniac who is willing to pay \$1 per car.’ Here I was, 24 years old and I had an appointment with the supervisor.”

After seeing that his work with Brookhaven checked out, Klein gave Gershowitz permission to extract the cars from the town’s landfills. Had he not been allowed to do so, “these cars would have been buried,” Gershowitz said.

Sam Gershowitz is the founder and owner of Gershow Recycling. Sam’s idea for the company began on visits to the Hamptons as a young man, when he saw junk cars and other scrap metal littering the sides of the roads. He saw that Long Island had a growing solid waste problem and something could be done about it. For the past 50 years, Gershow has recycled millions of tons of scrap metal and manufactured quality scrap products for companies in the U.S. and overseas.

Gershowitz has built a network of scrapyards throughout Suffolk County, Nassau County and Brooklyn. He has acquired over 250 railroad cars for shipping and a fleet of trucks. The company also ships its scrap metal by containers and freighters overseas.



Sam poses briefly while working in the Central Islip yard around 1966.

Born and raised in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn in 1939, he came from a large family where he was the second-youngest of six children. His parents, who emigrated from Russia and Poland, worked very hard, but had very little money.

He spent the early years of his life on Powell Street, which is located a few blocks from Gershow’s current facilities on Pitkin Avenue in Brooklyn. A few years later, his family moved to Shepherd Avenue in East New York.

His parents taught him the value of hard work early on in life. During the winter storms, he signed on with the New York Department of Sanitation as an emergency worker. As a young man, he said, “It didn’t mean anything to me to have three or four jobs at a time, even when I was at school.”

His parents taught him the value of hard work early on in life.

“The harder you work, the luckier you get.”

- Sam Gershowitz



Abe and Paulene Gershowitz taken in 1967 at Sam and Marlena’s wedding.



Sam would often visit Long Island's East End to fish. Here, around the age of 30, he proudly shows off the day's catch.

Working was always most important to Sam. He believed that if he wanted to earn something, he could put his energy into working rather than sitting in a classroom and so, at the age of 17, he dropped out of school. "I told my father I hated school," he recalled. "He said to me, 'I'm giving you two choices: either go to school or get a job. If you don't do either, get out of the house.'"

Choosing the latter, he took a job delivering soda and seltzer to families living in apartment houses, sometimes walking up three or four flights of stairs more than once for one customer. Six months later, he worked as a salesman for two years selling corrugated boxes and imported hardware to hardware stores and casket makers. He later spent the next two years working for a furrier. "I worked at a tanning company where they cured all the furs," he recalled. "That was a great job. My parents didn't want me to leave that job."

On the weekends, Sam would come out to the Hamptons. "I noticed there was junk all over the woods along the Long Island Expressway and Sunrise Highway," he said. "One day, on my way out there, I found out where the landfills were and saw mountains of cars."

**"Do it today.
Don't wait until
tomorrow."**

- Sam Gershowitz



Gershow's first business card shared by Sam and Lou.

At 22 years old, Sam began selling junk cars to scrap yards. In late 1963, he saw an advertisement in *Newsday* for an auto parts and junk yard for rent located at 212 Suffolk Avenue in Central Islip.

Several months later, "I wanted to look at the junk yard, but I couldn't remember where it was," Sam said. "So I went to the *Newsday* office in Garden City to see where the junk yard was located. I must've spent three days in a row going to *Newsday* until I found that ad."

It was the year 1964: the Beatles came to America and the New York Mets moved into Shea Stadium. Gas was only a quarter a gallon and milk was 93 cents a gallon. Sam moved into the rented property with the option to buy. He paid \$5,500 for the business, plus rent, and an option to buy the property across the street. He borrowed \$1,000 from his parents and asked his brother Lou, who was in the soda distribution business, to be his business partner. They decided to call the company Gershow Auto Parts and Wreckers. "It was a store with a little yard in the back," he recalled. When Lou saw the potential of this new business, he sold his business and became an active partner with Sam.

"The best thing that ever happened to me was marrying Marlena."
 - Sam Gershowitz



Marlena and Sam during an early date in the spring of 1966.



The entrance of Gershow's Central Islip yard in 1968 as seen from Suffolk Avenue.



The homemade car crusher made by Sam and Lou in 1966.



Sam's mother-in-law Jeanne Lederman.

In 1966, they purchased the two acres across the street for \$60,000, where a broken-down bus served as its office. The same year, they made their own car trailer from a very old car carrier previously used to transport new cars. It could carry six cars at a time. He sold these cars to another scrap dealer, who had a baler and would ship them to a steel mill.

The two brothers also made their own car flattener. "It was 22 feet long and seven feet high," Sam recalled. "There was a 16,000-pound door on top that would freefall and that's how the cars would be crushed."

In late spring of 1966, Sam met Marlena Lederman, a beautiful brunette at the club, Mr. Laughs in Manhattan. She was an elementary school teacher. They dated

throughout the summer and became engaged in the fall. "I think it's ironic that someone who never finished high school got to marry a college graduate who was a teacher," he said.

When he met Marlena's mother — Jeanne Lederman— she thought that, even though he was young and did not earn much money, he was very ambitious and had good business sense. She believed from the onset that her future son-in-law would become a very successful entrepreneur. Gershowitz borrowed \$7,500 from Marlena's mother to help the business move forward.

On January 1, 1967, Sam and Marlena were married. In the fall of that year, when she was expecting twin boys, Marlena resigned from her teaching position. The family first lived in a Jericho apartment. Montauk was their favorite place to visit, where Sam would often fish.

A few months after they were married, Sam was hit in the head with a hook. Despite his serious injury, he kept working. "I worked all day and didn't go to the doctor until the end of the day," he said.

Sam recalled the doctor telling him he would have needed 10 stitches but because he did not get the gash treated immediately, the doctor could not sew up the wound. The doctor had to apply a liquid bandage spray instead. When he went to sleep that night, the liquid bandage became stuck to the pillowcase. "Marlena cut the pillowcase off but left a piece of the sheet on my head 10 inches in diameter and I had to wear a hat to work to cover it up. Fortunately, it fell off a few weeks later."



Ira, Sam and Lou pictured in 1966.

"Don't tell me you can't do it." - Sam Gershowitz



Cars in Central Islip yard pile up before being scrapped.

Gershow bought an Al-Jon car flattener in 1968. It was the first factory-made flattener the company purchased and the first major business expenditure Sam made, paying \$30,000 for the machine. It was also the first portable car flattener on Long Island. It was one of the first major investments the company made in equipment — a practice the company continues to this day in order to be more efficient and stay ahead of the

competition. “You have to continually invest in your business for it to remain successful.”

“I called them [to order the flattener],” Sam said. “Not many people had car flatteners at the time. I always wanted to have the best equipment and that continues to this day.”

“At the time, we took the cars to Luria Brothers in Queens, who baled [the flattened cars],” Sam said. “Then, the first shredder in the area was opened in New Jersey. We were running three trucks a

day. We were starting to make a name for ourselves.”

To make sure the business was running smoothly, Sam worked 80 to 100 hours a week. “I left work when the work was done and that wasn’t until three in the morning on some days,” he said.

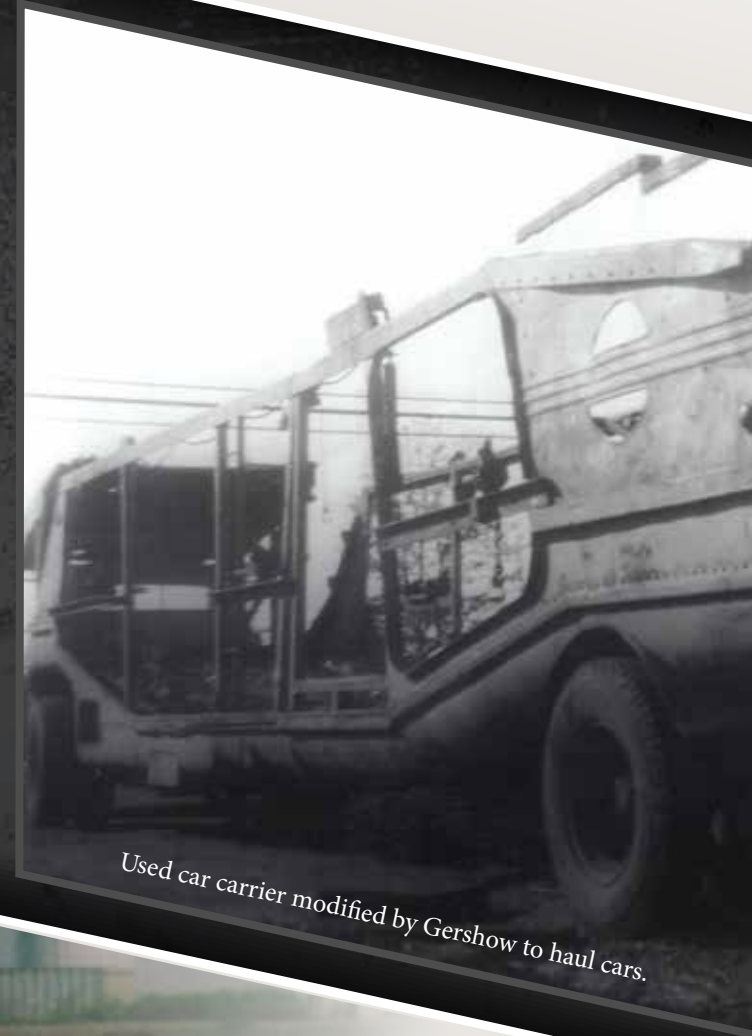
In 1969, the Town of Islip wanted to widen the road where Gershow was located. The town board had the property condemned, so the Gershowitz brothers moved their operations to McAdam Street off 5th Avenue in Bay Shore, where the facility still exists. In the 1970s, they continued to bring cars to be recycled to other facilities, including Westbury (now closed), Queens and New Jersey.

“You have to continually invest in your business for it to remain successful.”

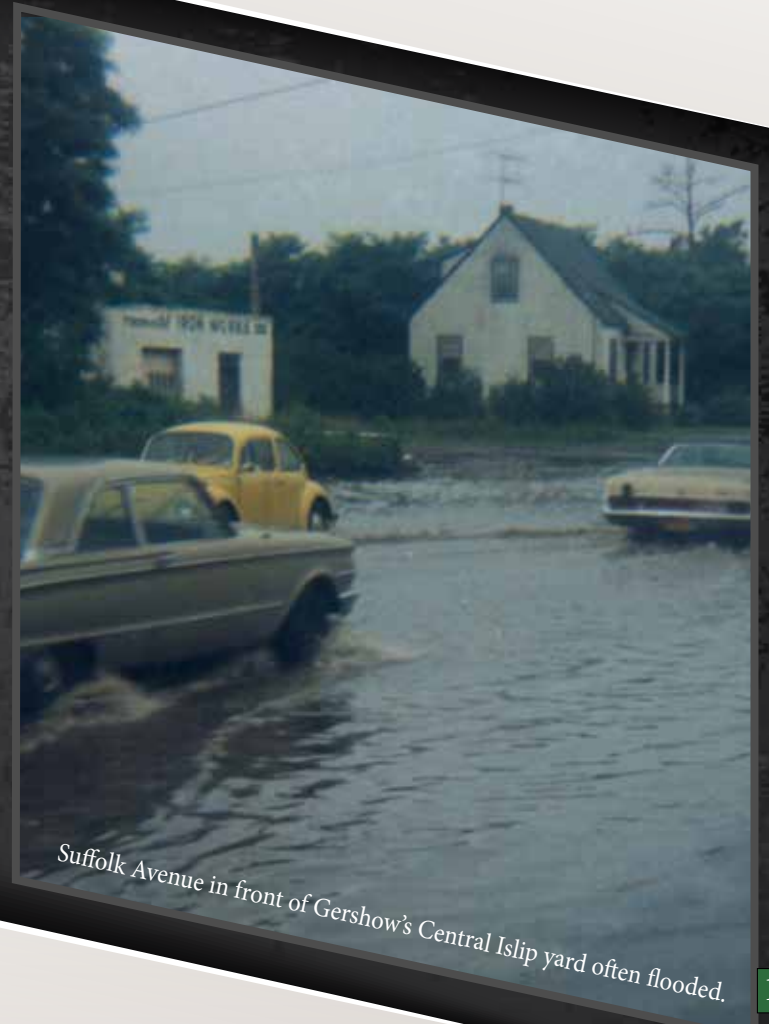
- Sam Gershowitz



Early car press increased the number of cars that could be transported.



Used car carrier modified by Gershow to haul cars.



Suffolk Avenue in front of Gershow's Central Islip yard often flooded.



Central Islip yard in the 1960s.



Medford scale house as seen in the 1970s.

Sam soon opened a second yard on Hagerman Avenue in East Patchogue. The company began to grow with approximately 15 employees, including five yard workers. In 1974, he purchased 13 acres of property on Peconic Avenue in Medford from Sid Farber, a well-known builder of residential and industrial properties. At the time, he hired a 22-year-old named Joe Bertuccio, who had been around cars his whole life, either repairing them or

racing them. Sam had him work in the yard and take tires off all incoming vehicles.

Six months later, when a machine broke down at the facility, Bertuccio took it upon himself to fix it. "Whenever something broke down, he said to me, 'I can fix it.'"

Bertuccio's role with the company began to grow. Whenever Sam was out of the office, Bertuccio oversaw the company's operations and even handled the payroll. "He became my right-hand man." Today, Bertuccio is an associate partner with the company.

The Medford facility, which is still in operation, did not have an onsite shredder. They began operating as a scrap yard and then received approval from the Town of Brookhaven to install a shredder in 1979. The shredder became fully functional in 1980.

Both Sam and Joe worked on putting the shredder together, which meant a lot of late nights. "We would be up until 1 a.m. putting it together," Sam said.

"There's nothing I can't fix."
- Joe Bertuccio



Foundation for main office in Medford in 1974.



Sam and Joe pose in front of the shredder rotors in 1981.



Marlena poses in front of one of the original diesel engines that were about to be installed in the shredder in 1981.



Pictured are Sam, Marlena, Audrey Klein and John Klein taken in 1993. From their initial meeting in 1968, in John Klein's office when he was Town Supervisor, the two became close friends and John worked with Sam as his attorney and his advisor — a relationship that has continued for over 35 years.

"Because I love what I do,
it never felt like work."

- Sam Gershowitz

**"In every deal, both sides
must make money."**

- Sam Gershowitz

“It was the process of turning junk into gold.”
- Sam Gershowitz



Sam with Kevin and Elliot, seen at the age of 25, begin to take on leadership roles with the company.



Sam is pictured in this photo taken in 1992.

“You can’t make chicken salad out of chicken shit.” - Sam Gershowitz



Sam points to the newly installed shredder in 1981.



Gershow's growing fleet of vehicles and equipment displayed at the Medford yard in 1991.



Elliot in front of new shredder motors in 1991.



It wasn't until 1981 when Sam decided to change the company name from Gershow Auto Parts and Wreckers, to Gershow Recycling. “We weren't really into the auto parts business,” he said. “It was really about people going green. I thought it'd be good p.r. The green movement was just beginning. It reflected what was being done.”

When the company's name changed, people would ask Sam what recycling was. He would explain to them, “It was the process of turning junk into gold.”

In the early 1970s, Sam's brother Lou left Gershow to go into the garbage business in New Port Richey, Florida. Business at the time was tough and Lou thought the grass would be greener in Florida. He wanted Sam to join him, but Sam was determined to stick with Gershow, the business he began. He took a loan from his mother-in-law and bought his brother out. Although his brother left for Florida, his son Ira remained in the business and played an active role.

Lou did not like living in Florida and, in 1972, returned to New York. Sam and Lou became partners again, but the early 1980s were especially tough on Gershow. There was a severe recession and the business had a lot of expenses. In spite of the recession, Sam wanted to put in a shredder. It was very expensive and Lou did not want to take that risk. Sam, therefore, bought Lou out for a second time. “I recall having only \$1 in our bank account,” he said. “It was a big risk to put in that shredder.”

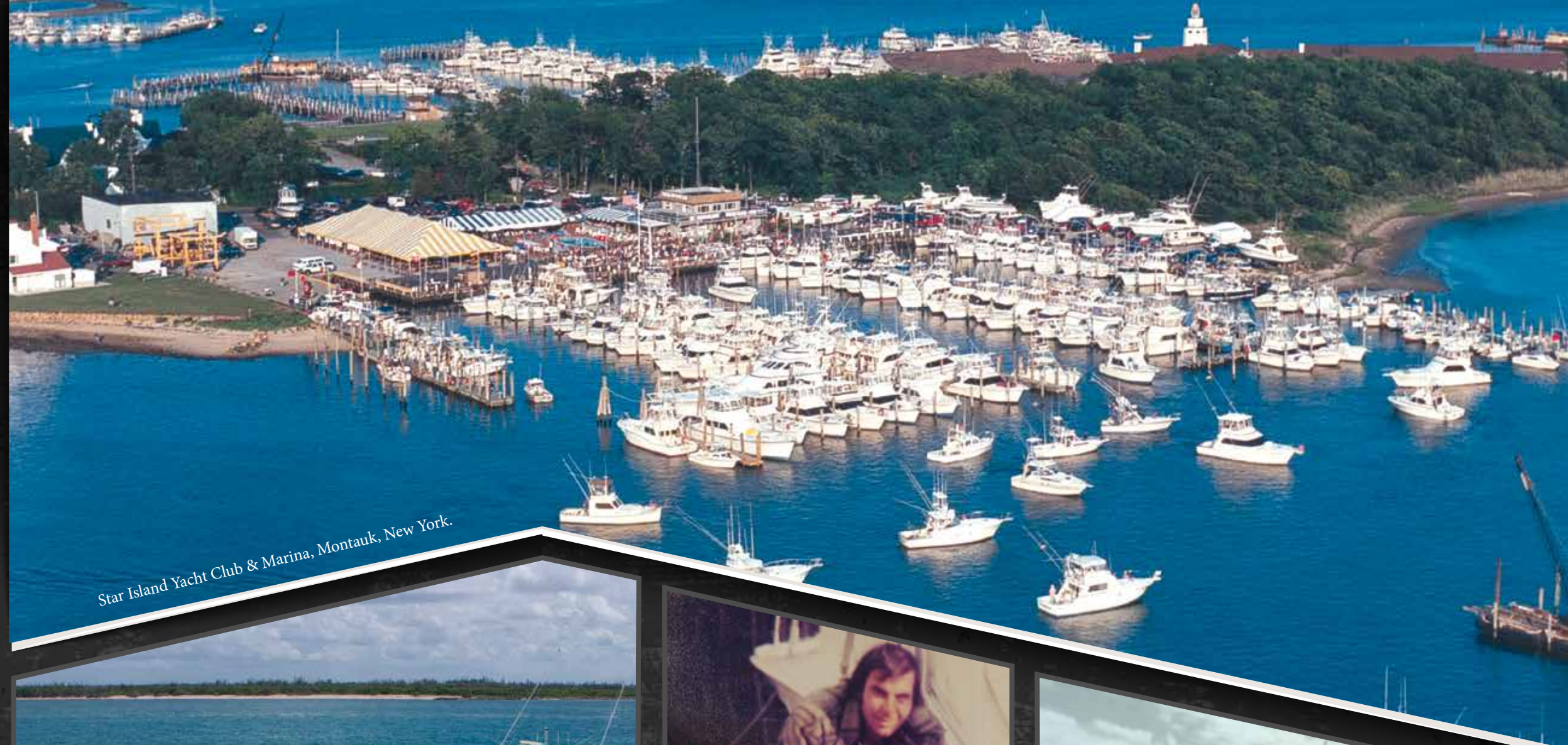
But soon the economy recovered and Gershow began to thrive during the mid-1980s. Between 1985 and 1989, during the summer season, Sam's two sons, Kevin and Elliot, worked at the company while they were home from college.

Although the company was becoming very successful, Sam was feeling restless. He wanted to branch out and own another business. In 1986, he decided to purchase Star Island Yacht Club in Montauk. For Sam, this made perfect sense: the ownership of the club was borne from his desire to own another business outside of the scrap recycling industry, plus his love of boating and sportfishing.

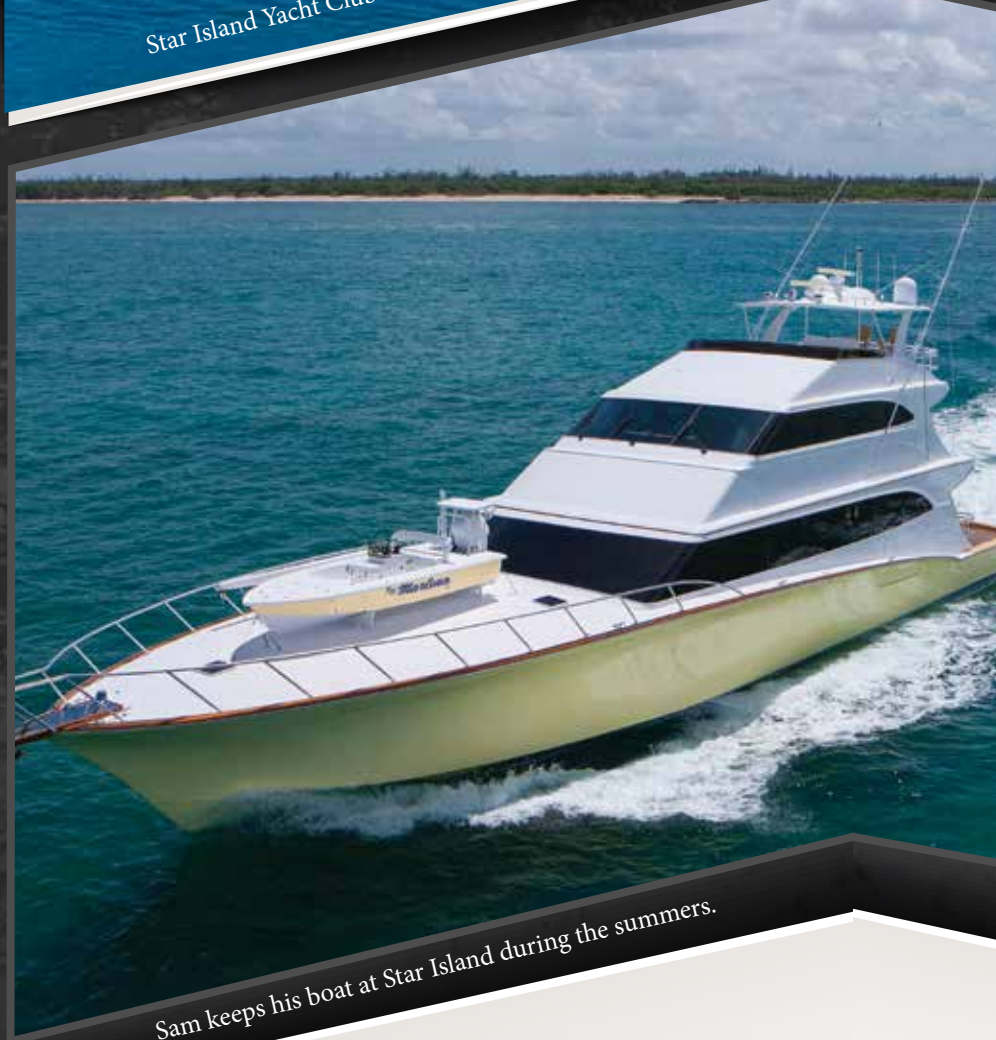
“I wanted to be in the boat business, so I went to Montauk and knocked on a few doors. I came upon this rundown marina. I met these guys and I asked them if they were interested in selling the place. They asked me, ‘Who are you?’”

Sam explained to them that he owned scrap metal recycling facilities in Medford and Bay Shore. “They then became interested and we started talking about the price,” he said. “I couldn’t sleep, I wanted the place so bad. [A few days later in late December], Marlena and I were in the Bahamas on my boat and I got a phone call from one of the owners. He said, ‘If you want to do the deal, we have to close before the end of the year.’”

The Star Island Yacht Club soon became a major tourist destination in the East End, known for its Shark Tournament, sportfishing tournaments and the Star Island Grill.



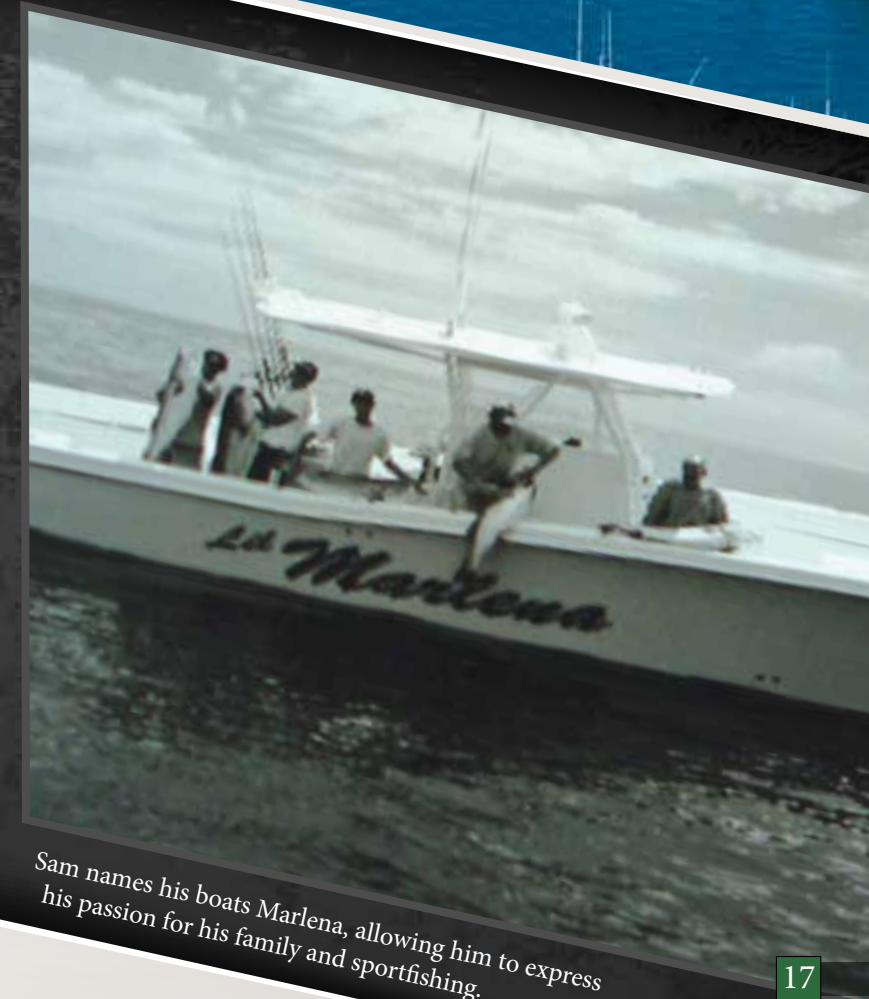
Star Island Yacht Club & Marina, Montauk, New York.



Sam keeps his boat at Star Island during the summers.



Sam with a giant tuna caught off Montauk in the 1970s.



Sam names his boats Marlena, allowing him to express his passion for his family and sportfishing.

Since then — in good times and bad — Gershow has expanded its operations throughout Long Island and the New York metropolitan area: Lindenhurst in 1991, New Hyde Park in 1996 and Brooklyn in 2001. When the economy started its downturn a few years later, many companies were tightening their belts, but Gershow saw this as a perfect opportunity to continue its expansion. The company opened four more facilities: Huntington (November 2007), Freeport (May 2010), Valley Stream (2011) and, most recently, Riverhead (summer 2013). The Freeport and Valley Stream locations both include construction and demolition (C&D) transfer stations, representing an expansion into a new business area for the company. Even through the worst economic conditions, Gershow has not had one single layoff in the company's history.

“We have seen the economy fluctuate over the past 50 years,” Sam said. “This past recession, while the most challenging since the recession of the early Eighties, was not our first one and it won't be our last.” He adds that he plans to expand the company's operations and improve them by purchasing new equipment.

Over the past few years, many improvements have been made at the Medford facility, including the development of its headquarters, the electrification of the shredder and new recycling equipment.

During its half-century of existence, Gershow has been a longstanding company as other recycling companies have come and gone.

“You can't go out of business unless you want to go out of business yourself.”

- Sam Gershowitz



Elliot, Sam and Kevin in 1992.

Gershow has always been a true family-owned and operated business, with the second generation currently running the day-to-day operations. His son Kevin is president of the company and his son Elliot serves as vice president. Jonathan Abrams, who is married to Sam and Marlena's daughter Pamela, is a key player and a manager of the company's operations. Joe Bertuccio's son-in-law, Ray Colon, is also a key player in the company and a manager of operations. Bertuccio's son-in-law, “DJ” Chasse, manages Gershow's Lindenhurst facility. In addition, Lou's son Ira was a long-time employee and facility manager with the company. The couple has eleven grandchildren and two step-grandchildren. “I would love to have them in the business as well,” Sam said.

In good times and bad... Gershow has expanded its operations.



Photo of Lindenhurst facility acquired in 1991.



Sam Gershowitz and his daughter Pamela Abrams.

Most importantly is the company's mission: Conserving the Future by Recycling the Past. By taking unwanted scrap metal and turning them into other scrap products, Gershow helps to preserve billions of tons of natural resources and ores that otherwise would have to be mined from the ground.

Sam says he has no plans to retire, but he has since cut back his work week to 40 hours — a far cry from the 80 to 100 hours he logged in during his younger days. When he is not in the office, he spends his free time reading the newspapers — something he has done since he was an adult — as well as spending time at the marina aboard his luxury boat, the Marlena, fishing on the East End, traveling and spending time with his grandchildren.

In addition to running his businesses, Sam gives back to the community. He is a supporter of Dowling College — where he received an honorary doctor of commercial science degree. He has also supported the Strang Cancer Prevention Institute, which performs research in the prevention of cancer and the clinical implementation of

early detection. He has supported the fund drive for Southampton Hospital's Montauk Medical Center. He also worked with the Suffolk County Board of Rabbis to provide funding for a menorah display at Islip MacArthur Airport for Hanukkah.

Under Sam's leadership, the company supports local schools by participating in Can Tabs for Kids, in which students bring in aluminum can tabs and school principals and administrators drop them off at Gershow's Medford facility. All the

money raised goes to benefit the Sunrise Fund in the fight against childhood cancer; Gershow, in turn, matches the amount raised.



Each year for the past 10 years, Gershow has offered the Gershow Recycling Environmental Conservation Scholarship to graduating high school students. In 2014, the company offered eleven separate scholarships to students at the schools in the nine areas where it has operations.



Sam receives an honorary doctorate in 1995.



Jonathan Abrams and one of Gershow's 2012 scholarship winners.



Participants of Can Tabs For Kids Program.

"If you don't take chances, you'll never succeed." - Sam Gershowitz

Conserving the Future by Recycling the Past.

In support of local fire departments, Gershow also donates the use of its junk vehicles to firefighters so they can perform their extrication exercises. In addition, Gershow has hosted firefighters, police emergency personnel and other first responders at its facilities to take part in mass casualty emergency drills.

“Recycling:
it happens here.”
- Sam Gershowitz

Gershow considers itself Long Island’s first “green” company, before anyone was talking about “being green” and recycling. What began as one man’s mission to clean out the sides of Long Island’s roadways has grown into one of Long Island’s best-known and largest environmental and manufacturing companies. As Sam says, “Recycling: it happens here.”



A major Urban Search and Rescue drill was held at the Medford yard in 2010.



Fox News Channel reporter Julie Banderas interviews Sam Gershowitz for Fox News' "On The Job Hunt" segment, which aired on November 4, 2011.



Gershow also regularly donates the use of its vehicles for fire department training exercises.



50 Years Later...

Gershow has expanded its operations throughout Long Island and the New York Metropolitan area to include nine scrap metal recycling facilities, featuring state-of-the-art technology, and is widely recognized as one of Long Island's most successful manufacturing and environmental companies.

BROOKLYN

1888 Pitkin Ave.
Brooklyn, NY
(718) 345-2240

VALLEY STREAM*

97 East Hawthorne Ave.
Valley Stream, NY
(516) 825-7244

FREEPORT*

143 Hanse Ave.
Freeport, NY
(516) 634-0644

NEW HYDE PARK

24 Denton Ave.
New Hyde Park, NY
(516) 746-1081

HUNTINGTON

149 W. 11th St.
Huntington Sta., NY
(631) 385-1200

LINDENHURST

635 Muncy Ave.
Lindenhurst, NY
(631) 587-1991

BAY SHORE

33 McAdam St.
Bay Shore, NY
(631) 234-1022

MEDFORD

Corporate Office
71 Peconic Ave.
Medford, NY
(631) 289-6188

RIVERHEAD

27 Hubbard Ave.
Riverhead, NY
(631) 727-3521



*C&D accepted at Valley Stream and Freeport locations