

Cuomo's building another Shoreham

We recently expressed concern about the speedy manner in which the New York Power Authority (NYPA) is proceeding with plans to construct a 250-megawatt generating plant, at a cost of \$250 million, at a LILCO (Long Island Lighting Company) site in Holtsville. That concern is growing.

Suffolk Life learned this week that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has granted NYPA a permit for the construction of the facility which NYPA will build for LILCO. This plant is another facet of the deal Governor Mario Cuomo forged with LILCO to close the Shoreham nuclear power plant. It is, reportedly, one of three that Cuomo agreed to have NYPA build for LILCO. Thus far there has been no information released concerning the siting, size or cost of the other two plants.

As a matter of fact, there has been very little information released about the Holtsville facility. NYPA submitted, as required by the DEC, a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). But notification of that document was buried in legal notices which appeared in *Newsday* and a small mid-Brookhaven weekly paper. And a copy of the document was placed in the Selden Library, not anywhere in the area where the plant will be built.

There were no public hearings on the DEIS as is usually the case in such matters because, according to a DEC official, "The comments we received were not all that significant." Of course not! Don't tell anyone about the plant, bury notification of the DEIS in a legal notice, and put the document in an out-of-the-area library and what else could you expect? If you wanted to slip an application through without public comment, this is surely the best way to go about it.

Why the rush? That's the question we have asked before and ask again. Why is NYPA so anxious to build the Holtsville plant when the study to determine the cost of converting Shoreham from nuclear to natural gas is still underway? There are many more questions: What will be the total cost of the Holtsville facility, as compared to the cost of a Shoreham conversion? Will the Holtsville facility be needed if it is economically feasible to convert Shoreham? Will Holtsville include the transmission lines needed to transport the power? Would it make more sense to convert Shoreham where the transmission lines, and electrical generating equipment, are already in place? What impact will Holtsville have on rates?

There's another important question as well. Do we really need additional electrical generating capacity at this time? Would we be better served to launch a ma-

ior conservation campaign to offset future needs? NYPA claims "LILCO has determined that it needs the Holtsville plant. It's included in LILCO's basic least-cost resource plan. Several other energy forecasts also call for construction of the plant. The State Public Service Commission (PSC) and the state's Energy Master Plan say LILCO will require the additional capacity by 1994." But that's hogwash! LILCO predicted all kinds of doom and gloom, brownouts and dimouts, when it was pushing the Shoreham plant down our throats. The PSC and the state Energy Office went along with those predictions, which never materialized. The additional capacity they said we absolutely would need was never needed. It was just an excuse to build Shoreham. Are they playing that game again?

LILCO will require the additional capacity by 1994? For what? With the economy as it is, and LILCO's rates and high taxes driving businesses out of the area, where is that demand coming from?

This entire matter smells of raw power and collusion. A state agency, NYPA, gets a speedy permit from another state agency, DEC, because the state's top official, the governor, worked a deal with LILCO. Members of the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) have expressed the same concerns, but Cuomo put Richard Kessel, his appointed head of the state's Consumer Protection Board, at the head of LIPA, and those concerns were stifled. If LILCO was involved in this project by itself, Kessel would be speaking out in opposition loud and clear, as he has done time and again in matters dealing with LILCO. But he can't, because he owes his consumer's job and his LIPA position to the governor. He has been effectively silenced. Ratepayers are without a voice.

Don't expect any help from the PSC because they were part and parcel of the Cuomo-LILCO deal. They have approved just about every LILCO rate hike request. They are but another state agency that is a part of the scam to put Holtsville on the backs of ratepayers.

We have been more than a little amazed that our state legislators are not more fully informed about this problem. They haven't spoken out to slow down the process until all the answers are in about the cost of a Shoreham conversion compared to the Cuomo-NYPA-LILCO plan to build LILCO three more plants. Why haven't they spoken out demanding the answers, insisting on a master energy plan, a determination of how Holtsville fits into the area's future needs?

The meter is running. NYPA has a permit to build, and from the way they have handled this matter thus far, we'd

bet they're going to rush into construction to offset any opposition, which is beginning to grow. We're heading down that Shoreham road again, not with the threat of nuclear power but in the threat to our pocketbooks. This region has lost thousands upon thousands of jobs because of two major factors: high energy costs and high taxes. Businesses have closed their doors here to go to areas where energy costs and taxes are lower. Increased energy costs hike taxes as well because schools, and all levels of government pay the

higher bills too, and tax us more to pay them. We can't let this happen!

Unless more sensible heads prevail, and the brakes are applied to put a hold on Holtsville until the answers are in about a possible Shoreham conversion, we appear certain to face the financial impact of another LILCO folly, another Shoreham.

If that happens, will the last one to leave Suffolk County please turn out the lights?

And why not?

Perot is back

Ross Perot flip-flopped last week and announced he is a candidate again for the Presidency of the United States.

Perot emerged on the Presidential scene last spring when, on the Larry King show, he said that if the people wanted him to run, he would. Volunteers would have to secure the necessary signatures to put him on the ballot in all 50 states. Within 60 days, what seemed impossible was being accomplished. He was in a three-way tie in the polls with President George Bush and Bill Clinton.

During the Democratic National Convention, Perot surprisingly and abruptly announced that he was pulling out. Many of his early supporters were devastated. How could he do this to them. Perot had caught the imagination of the disenfranchised, those who felt that our government no longer represented them, that they were merely pawns, not citizens.

At the time, Perot said his candidacy would be disruptive, it could lead to the next President of the United States being selected by the House of Representatives rather than by the electoral college, whose members represent the voters in each state.

We, as were many Americans, were disappointed. We hadn't made up our mind whether we would support him or not, but we thought his emergence into the campaign would break the logjam of apathy that has paralyzed many voters. His campaign, if he had remained as a candidate, could have been of substance. Fresh new ideas would be injected into the thought process. Both major candidates would be flushed out and made to stand up to the issues. His re-entry into the campaign, at this time, can still be positive although it will not

have the effect that it would have had.

Perot can be the impetus needed to stimulate people who have failed to vote in the past to register to vote. They now have someone other than Mickey Mouse or Donald Duck to support.

Warning: To vote in November's election you must be registered here in New York State. You can register on Saturday, October 10, at various locations throughout the county. Registration forms are available at the Board of Elections in Yaphank, at all post offices, town halls, libraries and village halls. All mail-in registrations must be post-marked no later than October 9. You can also go to the Board of Elections in Yaphank and register in person by October 9. If you don't register, you will not be able to vote for Perot or anyone else on November 3.

Do not allow others to make the choice for you, or you will suffer the consequences of those who impose their wishes upon you.

Perot's voice in this election can still be a positive force. He can force the candidates to discuss the issues they have been trying to duck, such as the national debt, spending more money than we take in, taxes and the application of taxes. Perot will have the luxury of presenting the unpleasant, the ugly and the front-runners will have to expose their true beliefs.

During the next 30 days the Presidential race will heat up with Perot in it. Maybe on November 3 we will be able to select a candidate for the right reasons for a change.

And why not?

Read the questionnaires carefully

In today's *Suffolk Life*, candidates for state legislative offices answer over 100 questions on how they stand on the issues you have raised. The questionnaires for U.S. Senate and Congressional races will be published next week.

We encourage all residents who intend to vote this November to answer the questions themselves. Compare your answers to the candidates you will be voting for. There are no right or wrong answers, just your position and the position of the candidates.

The questions have been developed in a nonpartisan manner. They touch on almost every area of concern, from philoso-

phy to issues that the candidates may well be voting on during the next two years.

This public service project has consumed hundreds of hours of the *Suffolk Life* staff. The candidates themselves had to agonize over their answers, for the answers are either "yes" or "no" and the format does not give them the opportunity to rationalize their choices. Their campaigns, their publicity and their advertising gives them this opportunity.

We warn voters to be very leery of answers left blank. The candidates are attempting to hedge their commitments. They hope to fool you. We recommend that you assume the worst. If you feel positive about an issue and the candidate has

left his answer blank, you can fairly well rationalize that candidate has made up his or her mind, but fears if he or she speaks the truth, you might not support them.

We utilize the "yes" and "no" format because this, in essence, is the format the candidates will utilize when the issues become votes that they will have to cast as office holders.

We also do this because it eliminates the waffling and the rhetoric that tends to confuse the viewpoint of the candidate, and leaves you wondering where they stand and what they said.

Take particular note of the answers where we asked "will they initiate legis-

lation to address an issue?" Comparing answers to performance, we have found an alarming amount of failures by incumbents to follow through in introducing legislation they said they would. We encourage all voters, after studying these questionnaires, to save them, refer back to them during the term of office of the candidate. Write to them, remind them of their pledge if they have said they would initiate legislation and it has not been done.

The questionnaires also provide you with a good report card at the end of the candidate's term so you can tell what they did, what they promised to do, and what they didn't.

And why not?

Survival is the name of the game

We will elect a president, a senator and our congressman this coming November 3. This election comes down to us against them. We are the people, we are the government. They are merely the mechanics. There isn't one of us rich or poor not feeling the pinch. Federal, state and local taxes have taken, and are continuing to take, an increasing amount of our livable income. On the federal level, taxes have been increased alarmingly, the same on the state and local levels. The mechanics, the elected officials, have an insatiable appetite. There are no checks and balances currently in place.

Five years ago, President Ronald Reagan, on national television, slammed down the budget, a 1,200-page document, and stated that as president he had to take it or leave it. If he didn't take it, government would be closed down. He outlined numerous examples of utter waste contained in the document. He asked for the same power that 43 out of our 50 governors have, line item veto. But congress would not give this to him.

Pork Barrel waste

Congress fills the budget with pork barrel projects that are not needed, not even wanted. As an example, Reader's Digest this month pinpoints three examples:

Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) was briefed by the director of the University of Alaska's Geophysical Institute and another physicist on their research, including studies of the aurora borealis. One of their graphs, according to the Reader's Digest story, seemed to imply that electrical power could be harnessed from Auroras. Stevens, ranking Republican on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, earmarked \$25 million to determine the type of supercomputer needed for "auroral energy research." Despite protests from the scientific world, the senate approved this funding, although the House opted to rescind the appropriation later. Insiders predict Stevens will act to restore the funds. And, as Reader's Digest reports, "The University of Alaska stands to gain a supercomputer it doesn't need to satisfy one senator's fantasy that no scientist will support."

In 1988, a bold plan was introduced to the Miami City Commission to transform a 1.8-mile stretch of Biscayne Boulevard

into "an exotic garden for people to enjoy the richness of city life." Miami city commissioners loved the plan, but didn't have the \$18.6 million needed. But since Biscayne Boulevard is a section of the federal highway system, they decided they would donate the land so that Uncle Sam, the government, would provide the dollars. Rep. William Lehman (D-Florida), chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, was the vehicle by which those dollars would be secured. Lehman introduced a bill that included \$1.7 million for engineering and environmental studies for the garden, listing it as a "demonstration project" to be funded by the Federal Highway Administration. By the time that bill was approved by the House—the vote was 394-17—it had been bloated by another 92 such "demonstration projects" at an additional cost of \$517 million.

"High on a bluff in the northeastern corner of Mississippi, construction continues on a \$3 billion solid-rocket project the space program doesn't need, and the Bush administration doesn't want to fund, but no one seems able to stop," Reader's Digest reports. The reason: Rep. Jamie L. Whitten (D-Mississippi) is the longest serving member of congress. He became chairman of the House Appropriations Committee in 1979, "and began bestowing gifts of taxpayer money on his district almost at will," the story reports. The cost of the rocket project which Whitten has decided is vital, though everyone else seems opposed, has ballooned to \$3 billion. And Whitten, each year, has been successful in having millions of dollars pumped into the project—\$465 million in 1992 alone, another \$401 million in 1991.

"We need help"

The Reader's Digest story, which also cites the need for line item veto authority for the president, is summed up nicely with words by Senator John McCain (R-Arizona): "We lack discipline. We are spending addicts, and we can't admit it. We can't just say no. We need help."

This is just a fraction of the waste that has led to the \$3.5 trillion debt our country faces. In individual debt, for every man, woman and child in the United States this is over \$30,000 per year.

Without the power of a line item veto, it will make no difference who the presi-

dent is. He will be paralyzed by the lack of this tool to put the brakes on runaway federal spending.

Checkbook ability

During this past year, we had a much closer and more personal glimpse of our congressmen's ability to balance their own checkbooks. All three congressmen from Suffolk, George Hochbrueckner, Thomas Downey and Robert Mrazek, and another incumbent, Gary Ackerman who is now running in Suffolk because of redrawn district boundary lines, all overdrew their personal checking accounts at the House Bank. The House Bank is now defunct, having been dissolved. Their own personal inability to balance their own checkbooks is only symbolic of what they have done with the country's checkbook. They have overspent the country's ability to raise funds through taxes. They have raised the national debt from over \$1 trillion 10 years ago, to \$3.5 trillion, and it is going up at the rate of a half-trillion dollars every six months.

Amendment fails

This past year, Congressman Charles Stenholm, a Democrat from Texas, offered a Balanced Budget Amendment which stipulated once the budget had been certified as balanced by congress and presented to the president, it would require a vote of 60 percent of congress to increase the spending beyond its limits. In other words, congress would have to live within this budget to fund the government.

Congress refused to pass the amendment. Incumbent Congressman George Hochbrueckner defended his "no" vote by declaring congress must have the ability, to deal with unexpected matters, to have unbalanced budgets. This is the problem. We, as individuals, must live within our means, live within a balanced budget. Our businesses, our profit-making, tax-paying institutions must do the same. As long as we have congressmen who feel that their mission is to preserve the ability of the federal government to have unbalanced budgets, we will have runaway spending. We will have deficit financing. We will have increased taxes and we will never be able to get off the merry-go-round.

Every incumbent congressman we spoke to opposed putting limits on the spending by congress. They glibly fall back

to asking questions such as, what would you have us cut back, social security, veterans benefits? Or other popular programs? There are billions of dollars of fat in the federal budget that can be cut back if congress had to prioritize their spending to live within their means, a condition which would be imposed by a balanced budget.

Combine a legally-balanced budget with presidential ability of a line item veto and fiscal sanity would be restored to America, whether the president be Democrat or Republican.

Out of control

Congress is self-perpetuating. It is an institution that is out of control because it is driven by people whose first and foremost goal is to be re-elected regardless of the damage that they do to the public.

Our local congressmen, the incumbents, Downey, Hochbrueckner, and Ackerman know that although you are disgusted with their personal behavior, and the financial ruination they are bringing to this country, you will look at congress and say, the institution is rotten to the core but my man isn't.

They have used your tax dollars for constituents services. They have answered your mail with your money. They have returned your calls with staff paid by your money. Their mobile vans and town meetings are all funded through your taxes. They use their incumbent advantage to make you feel good about yourself and them. The big picture, the outrageous spending by congress does not get taken into consideration.

Buying your vote

Right now, your home is being bombarded by mail and electronic messages that are being paid for by PAC's and individuals who have contributed to buy the vote of your congressman. Congressman George Hochbrueckner recently revealed that he has accepted \$1.3 million in PAC money over the years. Downey and Ackerman have not fessed up as to what they have received, but since Hochbrueckner is the junior of the three, we can well imagine it is substantially more.

It is a very good possibility that next year we will have a totally Democratic congress, senate and presidency. Without any checks and balances, and all the promises that have been made along the campaign trail to the special interests, the United States will become far more socialistic than any other country in the world. More of the corporations and the individuals interest will be confiscated to fund the unrestrained demands of the mechanics of government.

Sock the rich

The popular cry today is "sock it to the rich." Congress and the Democratic presidential hopefuls are quick to say they are going to finance all of these programs by taxing the rich. What they do not tell you is that the "rich" only comprise one percent or two percent of America. A 100 percent tax on the earnings of the rich would only fund between four percent and five percent of the total tax needs. The other 95 percent must be made up. Guess what, it will be on our backs, the middle class, particularly the middle class here on Long Island where our combined income of \$40,000 per year places us on a nationwide scale in the upper echelon of middle class.

If you think your tax burden has been bad in the past, we fear you haven't seen anything yet. How you vote this November may well determine your survival. Please, vote on the issues, the track records of the incumbents and the positions offered by the challengers, rather than party affiliation. Be informed. Cast your vote carefully.

And why not?

Where are the cuts?

One year ago this month, Robert Gaffney was running against Patrick Halpin for county executive. Gaffney ran on a platform of downsizing Suffolk's government to a point where the people of the county could afford their government, and be able to remain in their homes.

On October 1 of this year, Suffolk County residents started paying a half-percent increase in sales taxes. Gaffney claimed he needed this increase to overcome the deficit he inherited from the past administration.

Gaffney, earlier this month, presented his own budget for 1993. It calls for an overall increase in real estate taxes of 20 percent. In Riverhead, it's 60 percent. Gaffney, during his first nine months in office, has failed to downsize Suffolk County's government. He has failed to come up with the cuts or programs that would have generated tax relief.

Suffolk Life supported Gaffney because we believed he had the ability to take firm control on the reins of Suffolk government. We had been particularly impressed by his awareness that if he did the right thing, he would make enemies and would not be a two-term county executive.

Unfortunately, Gaffney chose to make his enemy the people by going back on his word, and not producing the tax relief that was their main concern.

Gaffney has three years and three months to redeem himself. The only way he can do it is to bring down the cost of Suffolk's government. We believe he should start at the top. He should amend his budget so that it reflects that the county executive will be paid 10 percent less than he currently is getting. His entire appointed staff, anyone making more than \$40,000, likewise, should share in the burden of their

failure by taking a five percent cut in pay. He should request that the elected legislators do the same and cut their salaries by 10 percent, and those of their appointed staff's salaries at least by five percent also.

None of these cuts should be restored until a budget is presented that allows for a reduction in real estate taxes, and the elimination of one percent of the sales tax that is being used to pay off the sins of the past.

These cuts could be a pattern for cutting back, downsizing the rest of Suffolk's government by at least five percent. Gaffney and elected officials must show some responsibility for the mistakes that they have made. If they worked for private enterprise they would not only be asked to take a cut in salary, but most likely be asked to leave their jobs. Governmental employment should not be an exception.

And why not?

The Presidency: beyond the man

The recent television debates for the presidency of the United States have given us an opportunity to get to know the individuals, but they have failed miserably in letting us know how the individuals think, who is behind them and where they draw their philosophical differences from.

As a young man I searched for a party that I could identify with. I went to Republican and Democratic club meetings. My favorite question was, "Can anyone explain the difference between the Democrats and the Republicans?" When I broached this question at a Democratic club meeting to Suffolk County's first county executive, H. Lee Dennison, he probably gave me the best truthful answer. He said, "The Democrats start projects and the Republicans pay for them."

Subsequently, Jack Kennedy, who I met in Worcester, Massachusetts, was making his bid for president. I had been impressed by him and volunteered to serve on his campaign. I was appointed co-coordinator of the Suffolk Citizens for Kennedy. He went on to victory and I resumed my place in private life.

Over the next 30 odd years of building Suffolk Life, I had read tons of material, had hundreds of thousands of discussions, and taken part in our government as a journalist and a citizen activist.

Over the last 30 years, I have interviewed, with my staff, almost every candidate who has sought local, county, state and federal office from New York.

I have known my own personal days of poverty as well as riches, and during these 30 years have touched both highs and lows on different occasions. I have lived in the fear of war, of atomic annihilation.

Initially I was a supporter of our involvement in Vietnam, but then became a critic of our government because of its insistence upon our fighting a war with one hand tied behind our back. Numerous friends went to this war and came back a fraction of the person they were when they left these shores. I had friends who lost sons. I had a buddy who contracted a severe case of Agent Orange, which caused his death after an agonizing last year wracked with cancer.

As a child I well remember the air raid drills, the announcement of the deployment of the first atomic bomb. A picture that is still burned in my memory is of a Japanese child literally melted to death.

The 'Great Society'

During my formative years, my parents discussed government and politics extensively. Although I do not know their registration, which they considered a private matter, they had Democratic leanings. This as a given, I often heard my father express fear surrounding the programs that had been created by FDR during the Great Depression. My father's concern was that these temporary social programs which were supposed to come to an end had seemed to be proliferating as the economy improved.

Following JFK's assassination, Lyndon Johnson became president. As a southerner, he was looked at as a conservative Democrat but, in reality, turned out to be the most socialistic president the United States ever had. His Great Society programs of entitlements are the programs that are the cause of our financial nightmare of today. They are the programs that provided the groundwork for a whole class of people to survive without working. They are the programs that have led to our skyrocketing medical costs. The same programs that have led to a privileged class who work within the establishment and, without risking a cent of their own capital, have become the wealthy elitists of the United States. The monster of this bureaucracy appears to be out of control, consuming more and more tax dollars and leaving a smaller percentage of the federal government to be controlled by the elected.

During the Johnson years, the president had a veto-proof congress. It was a totally Democratic administration. There were no checks and balances.

The economy falters

After the passage of the Great Society programs, the once stable economy of the United States started to falter. Interest rates, which had been under six percent, increased substantially. Johnson was replaced with Richard Nixon.

During the Nixon era, the Vietnam War came to a head. Fear of World War III was prevalent. Russia was arming herself at an alarming rate. Nixon was forced to resign as a result of Watergate, not because of Watergate itself, but because he did not tell the truth. He was replaced for a short period of time by Gerald Ford, who lost his bid for election to Jimmy Carter.

Carter was the former governor of Georgia. He was

considered an outsider to Washington and he proved never to be able to penetrate that wall. During the Carter era, in an attempt to establish more Great Society programs, the economy went into a tailspin. Inflation rose at an alarming rate. Interest rates reached usury points, topping 20 percent. The government was absorbing more income than it could produce through taxes. Capital markets dried up as interest became prohibitive. Unemployment was massive. Internationally, the United States was considered a paper tiger as we had gutted our military. Our country did not seem to have the will or the desire to protect ourselves or our allies. The rally cry of Reagan's election bid was, "Are you better off today than you were four years ago?" That was a fair question, one that should be asked every time a president seeks re-election.

The Reagan era

During the Reagan era, America entered a great rebuilding. Unemployment dropped below the 4.4 percent factor, which is technically considered full employment as it is calculated that those who still do not have jobs at this percentage point either do not want to work or are unable to do so.

In our own business, we found it very difficult to hire new people. The minimum wage for entry level jobs was \$3.50 per hour. We found ourselves, as did Burger King and McDonald's, paying \$5 per hour for the least skilled job. It was during the Reagan era that we were able to double and triple our employees' wages while at the same time, making excellent profits. We are only a microcosm of the grand prosperity our country was enjoying.

About 22 percent of Long Island's economy, during this period, was involved in military production. Reagan not only took the country from the depths of recession to an unparalleled height of economic optimism but, on the international scene, he was able to open up meaningful talks with the Soviet leaders which led to meaningful treaties being signed.

Reagan was replaced by our current president, George Bush. Domestically, Bush has not been Ronald Reagan. Internationally, he has, and better. During his stewardship, the Soviet Union has collapsed. They are in the process of going from a totalitarian form of government to a democracy. Their economy is converting from socialism to capitalism.

Bush, as president, was able to bring together, for the first time, the countries in the United Nations to present a unified defense against Saddam Hussein. As commander in chief of the United States forces, he orchestrated a short-lived war that returned Kuwait to its people and confined Hussein and his people to their borders.

At home, we have seen unemployment rise again. Unemployment now stands at about seven percent nationwide. Some three percent of the market who are employable cannot find jobs. Many have lost overtime and second jobs. This has made all of us feel the pinch.

Universal economy

The government can do little about the cause of unemployment. We are part of a universal economy and almost every country's economy is down. We are in a post-war era where up to 20 percent of our national product no longer is going to a war effort. The percentages being spent on war are diminished as the prospects for permanent peace become more enduring.

The transformation from war to peace cannot be instantaneous. It will take at least the next term of president, probably two, before the transformation can be completed.

During the second debate, a black woman asked the three white candidates for president how they had been personally affected by the economy of today. She misstated her question originally by asking how the national debt personally affected the candidates. Bush answered first and, until he received a clarification on the question, fumbled badly. Probably what he should have said was that the recession was probably going to cost him his job. He blew a wonderful opportunity to say to the American people that, given his druthers, he would trade peace of mind and security and a dissipation of the fear of war for a downward adjustment in the economy. He should have asked, "What price for peace?" He didn't.

'Sock the rich'

Bush also blew the opportunity to counteract Clinton's "sock it to the rich" theme. Clinton says he is going to get us out of our economic dilemma by taxing the rich, those that make over \$200,000. Those that make over

\$200,000 are two percent of the population. If you taxed their entire earnings at 100 percent, you could not fund five percent of the total spending by the federal government. Bush knows this, we don't understand why he has not used it. Clinton knows it, we can understand why he cannot use it. If he did, he would have to admit that his economic plan is smoke and mirrors that will affect the middle class with trickle down taxation. To raise the kind of meaningful amounts of money he wants to spend during his administration, he may tax the rich, but, he must also tax the middle class. The middle class earns 90 percent of the individual wealth in this nation. If you want to raise meaningful funds, you must tax the middle class. There is no other way.

It is a pleasure to see the Democrats finally addressing the entitlement programs, particularly welfare. Recently, when we interviewed Congressman Thomas Downey, with whom we have had, traditionally, differences in philosophy about welfare, Downey stated he had seen the light. He was coming around to our way of thinking. He said we must encourage people to get off the dole. Welfare should not be a way of life. Entitlement programs, such as these, are breaking the back of the middle class. He said his welfare legislation will extend the welfare benefits to give welfare recipients continued medical coverage, day care and job training for one year. During this year, all benefits will remain intact as the person prepares to become duly employable and ready to go into the job market. Maybe we showed our maturity too, for we found ourselves in agreement. But, then we asked the logical question. Would it be mandatory for the welfare benefits of those who had gone through this program to cease upon their leaving the program? He answered, of course not, if they couldn't get a job we will still have to carry them on welfare.

Americans are fed up

Most Americans are fed up with the giveaway programs that came out of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society.

We work hard for our own money and we resent seeing others who do not work, live better than ourselves. Welfare recipients and others who benefit from the entitlement programs have better and more extensive medical benefits than we have with our own plans. These benefits are even larger than those offered to government employees who have Cadillac-type medical coverage.

How often we have been disgusted in food stores where we have bought the bargains, the sale items, done comparison shopping on both price and value, and with a fistful of coupons that we have carefully clipped, stood in line and then watched someone else pay for their groceries with food stamps. It's not uncommon to see them buying the best cuts of meat, the top brands and all kinds of waste food products classified as junk food. In the parking lot you see them entering better cars than you can afford to drive, and newer too.

Dr. Thomas Sowell, an African-American columnist with Forbes Magazine, pointed out in the July 30, 1992, edition, "among the people whose incomes were in the bottom 20 percent in 1979, 86 percent were in some higher income bracket by 1988. Only 14 percent of the poor were in the bottom quintile a decade later. Fifteen percent had risen all the way to the top, 40 percent of the poor of 1979 were now in the top two quintiles. Only 2.8 percent of our country's population were continuously poor after 10 years."

This information was extracted from a report done by the United States Treasury Department. Based on this information, it would appear that the administration's "trickle down economic" theories have not only worked, but worked well.

As the saying goes, "If it ain't broken, don't fix it." Do we really want change for change sake

Electing figureheads

Unfortunately, during this campaign the American public has not been exposed to the real philosophies and the programs of each candidate. We will elect figureheads, but it will be the people who surround them, the philosophies from which they come, that will determine the rules and regulations, the taxes that we will pay, and the kind of government we will have for the next four years.

We, as citizens and in order to vote intelligently, must look at history for clues as to the philosophy and actions of those who have had the same political leaning who are today the standard bearers of their party.

Forget the faces, forget the images of the men, think about what values they hold near and dear. What are their philosophies? Compare them to your own and make a choice you will be willing to live with, without complaining about the ramifications for the next four years.

And why not?