

## Building Another LILCO

The Suffolk County Water Authority is quickly becoming LILCO Two. The water authority, like LILCO, is a private company operating outside of the business spectrum but inside the protection of government.

The Suffolk County Legislature, in another one of its brilliant moves, revamped the board of the water authority. They placed on the authority people from the environmental movement, people without solid business backgrounds, people no longer in touch with the people.

Leon Campo, a long time critic of LILCO who is now a member of the LILCO board, was named the head of this agency. His claim to fame: he was in tight with Legislators Wayne Prospect and Gregory Blass, who pushed for and achieved his appointment. Campo had made a career out of studying LILCO and has begun implementing many of its philosophies for the water authority. Using the Suffolk County ratepayers money, he has turned the authority into a mammoth public relations

propaganda machine, with Campo as the prime beneficiary. The authority appears determined to be another form of government rivaling the county legislature.

The authority has developed ambitious plans that will result in commercial water rates being increased by over 70 percent for large volume businesses, with homeowners facing increases up to forty-five percent.

The Suffolk County Water Authority, a creation of the Suffolk County Legislature is not responsible to the legislature or to the public. It proposes its own budgets and spending programs. It proposes its own rate increases, holds its own public hearings, and is its own judge. Can you imagine giving LILCO the power to set new rates, hold the hearings and then make the ultimate decision? The water authority is no different. It should not be the beneficiary and the final judge.

There is no oversight, no checks and balances. The only recourse the victims, the ratepayers, have is to wait for the terms of office of members to be concluded and then press-

ure legislators to replace those individual members who have created their own little empire.

Although the county taxpayers are already spending millions of dollars to preserve land, supposedly to protect our water, the water authority has embarked on its own land preservation efforts, supposedly to locate new wells on the acquired sites. Why can't such wells be placed on the land to be purchased by the county? Good question, but no answers.

The legislature has created a dangerous additional form of government complete with spending powers and must find a way to bring this duplication of efforts and fund-

ing to a halt. Although this body has spent a lot of taxpayers' dollars fighting the actions of the PSC, a bill now tabled in the legislature proposed giving the PSC the right to rule on water authority increases. Rather than pass this buck off to anyone else, why doesn't the legislature seek legislation that would give them, those who put Campo and the others in the seats, the authority to have final say on such water rate increases? What are they afraid of?

The legislators had better start turning off the faucet of spending that Campo has installed at the water authority. They got us into this mess, let them get us out of it.

And why not?

## Halpin's shell game

County Executive Patrick Halpin, after raising real estate taxes by as much as 160 percent, now has the audacity to go to the people and say, you don't like high real estate taxes, support my measure to increase your sales tax. Let me charge you eight percent and I can reduce your real estate taxes.

Mr. Halpin better get his head out of the sand. There is no support for increasing the sales tax. There is widespread support for reducing the real estate taxes. In 1983, the Suffolk County Legislature approved, and former County Executive Peter Cohalan signed into law, a cap on increasing real estate taxes. This measure was to take effect in 1985, stipulating real estate taxes would not be increased by more than four percent except for emergency provisions.

If the four percent cap had been honored instead of circumvented, the Suffolk County tax rate would be \$1.12 this year instead of \$3.86. County real estate taxes would be two-thirds of what they currently are. There have been no life threatening emergencies in the last four years here in Suffolk County, only wanton waste and abuse of the fiscal system we operate under.

The legislature and the county executive have thrown tons of our money at every problem or situation their feverish little minds could con-

jur up. They have not had the common sense as managers of government to demand productivity or results for the taxpayers' investment. They've lived in a fool's paradise where they thought there was no end to the people's ability to pay more. Our money tree has been chopped down and so has theirs.

Our Suffolk County Legislature and the county executive must be deaf, dumb and blind if they do not perceive the rage, the growing anger and frustration that is rampant from one end of Suffolk County to the next. The legislators are living in a dream world if they think the tax movement is a flash in the pan. The voters are speaking with a unified tongue. Their message is clear: Live within the 1983 law that you passed, reduce spending to the levels called for under the 1983 law or in November we will remember, and you are history.

Although the legislature is a funny farm, there are some individuals within its structure who have shown concern in the past for the taxpayers. Unless they start taking a firm stand against the free spenders, and begin pushing for spending cut measures, they will go out with the rest. They must have the courage to rise above the rhetoric and roll back the spending to levels that conform to the intent of the cap law that is on the books, or suffer the consequences.

And why not?

## Are you a Yahoo?

Ever since the tax bills came out earlier this year, there has been a growing storm of anger aimed toward those whose spending habits cause large tax increases. The protests have come from an across the board spectrum of county taxpayers, young and old and those in between. Their message is simple: That's it, that's too much, we've had it. We don't want caps, we don't want tokenism cuts, we want our taxes reduced to a level that we can afford to pay.

The growing number of taxpayers who have raised their voices and are participating in a tax revolt the likes of which has not been seen in Suffolk County before, are good people, decent citizens who have suffered through increased taxes year after year. But they have now reached the point where they will take no more. They can't. The burden has become too heavy. Many are being forced to sell their homes, to move elsewhere, out of state, to survive. Many more, however, have been pushed to the wall and are now standing firm. They are fighting back.

Sometimes their voices are filled with anger, their words ring out loud and clear. Others use signs to make their point. Whatever the method, the frustration is clear and the intent is survival.

Those who speak out are not "yahoos" as they were labeled in a

recent Newsday editorial. Webster tells us that a "yahoo" is an "uncouth or rowdy person." There's nothing uncouth about those who speak out against being taxed out of their homes, nor anything rowdy about people who are motivated by anger and shout out their frustration.

Newsday was editorializing against a spending freeze approved by the legislators, worrying about the impact of that freeze on services and staff reductions. "...Any placard waving yahoo from the back of the room can vote for an across-the-board freeze. It takes knowledge and discrimination to review a budget with precision," the Newsday editorial declared.

It also takes some knowledge and discrimination to know the difference between a yahoo and a decent, law abiding individual who has decided to fight back. From where we sit, both the legislature and Newsday lack those qualities. If Newsday would spend less time defending Halpin and nuclear plants, and a bit more time exploring the real hardships the escalating taxes are causing, it might know the difference between a yahoo and an angry citizen. It might come to the realization that a newspaper has a responsibility to its readers, and not just to companies like LILCO and select politicians.

And why not?

IF FOR ANY REASON,

**SUFFOLK LIFE**

NEWSPAPERS

IS NOT DELIVERED TO YOUR HOME OR P.O. BOX  
ON WEDNESDAY BY THE MAILMAN,

PLEASE CALL

**516-369-0800**

# Taxpayers! Join Tax PAC today!

After three months of meetings and time consuming efforts, Tax PAC is formally organized.

Tax PAC is your Suffolk County voice. Tax PAC is the taxpayers' Political Action Committee. Just as other PAC's speak up and lobby for their membership or vested interests, Tax PAC will speak up and lobby on your behalf to all elected officials who have a voice in spending and the amount you must pay in taxes.

Tax PAC of Suffolk is a county-wide organization with ten local town chapters, all speaking with one unified voice.

Tax PAC is not a political party or organization, and will not become one. The words "Political Action" have been used in its name because political action is something that politicians understand, and because it is going to take political action by the people to bring sense to the financial chaos caused by governmental spending sprees that have caused high taxes.

In order to reach out to the entire community, Tax PAC has been organized along the lines of a political organization in that it will have at least one representative in every election district throughout the county. These representatives will make up an executive committee for the town they are from. The representatives will select their permanent chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and treasurer. A representative of this group will be a member of the county committee.

Organizational meetings have been held in several different towns, and others are scheduled to be held now through the middle of May. In some instances these meetings have been attended by people who have volunteered their time and services to help get Tax PAC off the ground. From the end of April to the middle of June, other town Tax PAC's will be announcing general membership meetings which the public at large is encouraged to attend. It is planned that at these meetings a formal election will be held and the selection of permanent officials for each town group will take place.

Tax PAC will have a monitoring committee at meetings of every spending and taxing entity including school, fire, water and sewer districts, town, county and regulatory agencies. Tax PAC intends to review spending plans, examine spending procedures and make recommendations to the membership and then to elected officials.

We of Tax PAC believe taxes throughout Suffolk County can be realistically rolled back to meet the law and the intent of the law passed in 1983 by the legislature, not only on the county level but in school districts and towns as well. We believe this can be accomplished through prudent manage-

ment and frugal fiscal decisions without impacting the basic services that are needed by the majority of the people.

We intend to identify waste and abuse of the taxpayers' hard earned money. Where administrative costs are out of line and the productivity of the agency or government is not up to the dollar invested by the taxpayers, we will recommend slashes in the budget. Those budgets which do not reflect the public's ability to finance will be opposed. During the fiscal readjustment, we expect to see an increase in productivity so that the level of services received for our tax dollars invested are at least on par with the services received in other towns, counties and states.

Our ultimate goal is to make Suffolk County an affordable place to live, with reasonable taxes, a place we can be proud to live in. We want to stop the exodus of our good residents who want to stay, but are being forced to move because of oppressive taxation.

But it's going to take all of us to make it happen. The mere fact that the taxpayers are organizing has made the politicians sit up and take notice. Since the tax revolt started, there has been a flow of proposals for tax caps, freezes, rollbacks. Why weren't these proposals made before? Why did we have to get to this pitiful state of affairs with taxes driving people out of their homes? And you know what would happen if the tax revolt movement dies out. We'd be back to business as usual, and more tax increases.

Don't leave it to others to fight this battle. Volunteer your time and special talents. Join in this fight to reclaim control over our government and our financial futures. The first step is for you to immediately pick up a pen, fill out the form below and send it back immediately to Tax PAC, c/o Suffolk Life Newspapers, P.O. Box 167, Riverhead, NY, 11901. These forms will be forwarded to the town committees as they are received.

If you have had enough and are willing to do something about it, enroll in Tax PAC today. There is no obligation other than to be involved in your government and to volunteer what you can do to help bring the cost of taxes and government down.

Even if you do not have the time to actually help out, please enroll, because numbers count. If the free spending politicians know they are dealing with an organization that has an enrollment in the hundreds of thousands, they will sit up and pay attention. Tax PAC is your grass roots voice, your opportunity to stand up and be counted.

And why not?

## Enrollment Form:

Please enroll me as a member of Tax PAC. I believe taxes are too high and productivity from government too low. I am willing to join with my fellow taxpayer as a single voice.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Election District (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

In addition to enrolling as a member, I am willing to volunteer my expertise, time or effort in the following category:

1. Organization \_\_\_\_\_
2. E. D. representative \_\_\_\_\_
3. Town board monitor \_\_\_\_\_
4. County Legislature monitor \_\_\_\_\_
5. School Board monitor \_\_\_\_\_
6. Special District monitor (please indicate which) \_\_\_\_\_

I can offer my services in the following way:

1. Make phone calls \_\_\_\_\_
2. Open or stuff envelopes \_\_\_\_\_
3. Fund raising \_\_\_\_\_
4. Make donations \_\_\_\_\_
5. Public speaking \_\_\_\_\_
6. Legal \_\_\_\_\_
7. Accounting \_\_\_\_\_
8. Computers \_\_\_\_\_
9. Secretarial \_\_\_\_\_
10. Typing \_\_\_\_\_
11. Publicity \_\_\_\_\_
12. Public Relations \_\_\_\_\_
13. Other areas of contributed services not outlined \_\_\_\_\_

SEND TO: Tax PAC  
C/O Suffolk Life Newspapers  
P.O. Box 167, Riverhead, 11901

# Business: Partners or foes?

There is a new wave of opposition by some members of the business community on Long Island to the closing of the Shoreham nuclear power plant. This opposition is nothing new. The Long Island Association has been a long time proponent of the plant, concentrating its focus on the financial aspects with little regard for the impact on public safety.

The new thrust is toward mothballing the plant rather than closing and dismantling the controversial structure. James Larocca, LIA president, recently noted that "most people start from the assumption that preserving the asset makes better economic sense than destroying it." And according to published reports, Charles Gilman, an attorney representing Grumman, recently told the Public Service Commission, "To bulldoze it to earth will cost a lot of money. LILCO testified that this summer there are, in all probability, going to be brownouts. There's an energy crisis. It makes no sense, if this plant is going to be licensed, to tear it down when in an emergency situation it might be able to provide energy to the area."

Where is the concern for safety? And on what basis do we put any faith at all in the words of LILCO which has been, for years, trying to force its will by threats of power shortages?

While we might expect business to be, in most instances, bottom line oriented, there should be excep-

tions to the rule and Shoreham, in our mind, is such an exception. What happens to their own employees in the event of an accident? What happens to the families of the employees? Aren't they concerned?

Since finances seem to be their only concern, has the LIA given any consideration to the investments here on Long Island of its members and what would happen to those investments in the event of a serious accident at Shoreham? Do they realize their insurance will not cover them in the event of a nuclear accident, and LILCO does not have adequate insurance coverage to cover such losses?

Even more troubling to us is the fact that these business representatives are focusing no attention toward alternatives to the operation of Shoreham as a nuclear plant. They talk in terms of "bulldozing" it to earth, but is that the only alternative? What about the removal of the nuclear components, substituting another form of fuel? Natural gas has often been discussed and that approach has been applied elsewhere, most notably at the Zimmer nuclear plant in Ohio. If LILCO and the business community are truly concerned about the future energy needs of Long Island, why didn't they move in that direction, or at least seriously study the possibility, considering the uncertainty of Shoreham's future? Why did the business community support LILCO's nuclear at any cost philosophy?

Another possible alternative: Has there been any

consideration given to gutting the nuclear components from the plant, using the containment area for a burning chamber which could be used to burn garbage to provide the heat to make the steam to turn the turbines?

We're not surprised at the current stand of the LIA. For years, starting when the Long Island Lighting Company was the largest financial supporter of that organization, the LIA has been in LILCO's corner. What's coming out now is simply more of the same. But we are disappointed that Grumman—the company that once made Long Islanders proud because of the part it played in sending men to the moon—is joining in the current rhetoric.

Frankly, we expect more from Grumman, a company with the brainpower and engineering capabilities to play an important part in the ultimate resolution of this problem, with a solution that would not endanger the people of Long Island.

The people have spoken loud and clear, time and again. They do not want to live under the threat of nuclear power, and they want the matter settled once and for all. The time has come for the business community to face the moment of truth, are they with the people or against them? Partners or foes?

Delaying the solution by mothballing the plant is not the answer. It's time to solve the problem. Is the business community up to the challenge?

And why not?

## Sick empty feeling II

On June 6, 1988 Suffolk Life, published an editorial entitled, "Sick Empty Feeling." It was in reference to Governor Cuomo's deal I on Shoreham. In the editorial we said, "there will be no immediate decommissioning of the plant, it will sit there for years because there is no place to put the nuclear waste from the decommissioning process. What is to prevent the federal government, the staunch nuclear energy proponent, from confiscating the plant in the name of national defense, the national energy policy or whatever?"

Today, April 13, 1989, the Shoreham headlines proclaimed that the federal government is stepping in. They intend to throw up every roadblock they can find and, if they have to, they will create some to stop the plant from being dismantled. The Shoreham scenario never ends.

The federal government does not want the Shoreham nuclear power plant dismantled. The Washington crowd wants it running. They care nothing about the lives of the residents of Suffolk County. They only care that the nuclear industry survives, the Wall Street and financial interests' investments in this industry are protected.

We would not be a bit surprised if the federal government does proceed with an attempt to nationalize the plant in the name of national defense. The federal government has totally misread Long Island. It is not the anti-nuclear people who have driven the "Stop Shoreham" movement, it is the residents' fears and concern for their lives. They do not believe that Shoreham is safe. They do not trust the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), which took the position of an advocate of this plant rather than a regulator. Long Island residents do not believe that because

the bureaucrats in Washington have changed the rules, held a farce of a paper drill and proclaimed that Long Island can be evacuated, that they can safely get themselves and their families out of here when an accident occurs.

The Washington bureaucrats voice platitudes about the safety of nuclear power and the possibility of evacuation when these very same people have turned this nation's nuclear weapons manufacturing system into a national disgrace. Many of these plants are time bombs waiting to go off, they have polluted the ground water and rivers and streams to a state of ruination. It is going to cost this nation billions of dollars to deal with the damage already there, and billions more for the damage they are still doing, and for the replacement of plants which must now be closed. And there's no telling how many lives will end because of the health problems they have caused.

The federal government has already shown itself not to be trustworthy in its assurances of safety. Federal officials said the fallout from atomic bomb testing would pose no danger to the people in nearby communities. They were wrong then—many lives have been lost and much suffering has occurred—and they are wrong now. They are not to be believed. And worse yet, they don't care. They and their families are insulated from the dangers, safe and secure in Washington, making decisions which threaten the lives of others.

The actions of the administration and its officials are a disgrace and a slap in the face to every person on Long Island who was once proud to be an American. It's time to fight for the county we once had, one which cared for its people.

And why not?

## Political retaliation

Tax PAC has been formed. It's an organized action committee whose goal is to reduce taxes through sensible cuts and elimination of waste.

The politician's reaction is arrogance. One politician's reaction was: "Organize all you want. We will bring the people to their knees by taking away the services that are near and dear to them; the ones they can see, they can feel. We have survived taxpayers' anger before. We will be here long after your efforts have burned themselves out." These words were uttered to me last January; the source of them I will keep confidential because they were spoken off the record, and this hardened politician was, at least, being honest.

This past week we saw the words and the threat becoming reality when the county legislature, in its version of the shell game, announced a tax levy rollback to 1987 levels. In the past, when talks of cuts were voiced by Suffolk County Executive Patrick Halpin, the proposed cutbacks came in the form of a cutback in foot police patrols, in health services and other people sensitive items.

Henrietta Acampora, whose budget has skyrocketed over the years, announced she was eliminating the town's participation in fireworks, opening the pools late and cutting back on summer recreational services. These are two vindictive politicians who have taxed

you beyond belief and arrogantly are trying to force you into rolling over and playing dead.

Both Acampora and Halpin are running branches of government that are bloated to obesity, oozing with fat. They spend money like drunken sailors on outside legal fees, consultants and contractors. They misuse the personnel that they are charged with employing, neither expecting, demanding or even worse, providing work for the people they hire.

Any politician who answers Tax PAC's call for cutbacks in spending with the elimination of people sensitive services has to go. It's time for budgets to be made up by people with common sense and not be an instrument of political retaliation. Those who are playing these political games shall see we will "remember in November."

It is time for common sense, for realism. These elected officials should be working their budget

people over-time to cut out the programs, the expenditures that are designed for the solicitation of contributions. Fat cat city is over in Suffolk County.

We would hate to see the voters paint everyone with the same brush. They will, however, unless good people emerge out of the muck of politics and become true public servants, people who have heard the voice of the voters who want the fat stripped out of the budget, who want patronage eliminated, who want marginal programs removed. If those who currently occupy the positions do not, we will find people who will.

November is just six months away. There's not much time left for the politicians to show they have heard the voices of the people. They had better stop playing political games and start digging for and cutting out the waste in government at all levels.

And why not?

## Just the beginning

We have been heartened to see some Suffolk County legislators finally awakening to the tax rebellion. But they, like the proposals they have now spawned, have a long way to go.

This past Monday night, the legislators held a public hearing on a proposed bill that would roll back in 1990, the 1989 property tax levy by \$56 million. This is far too little, and not a serious effort at addressing the tax inequity residents of Suffolk County are suffering under.

The legislature raised the property tax levy from the adopted budget in 1988 by \$88 million. They are blowing smoke at us by saying now, aren't we good little boys and girls. We are going to reduce our increase that we have imposed upon you by 50 percent. In addition, they want to reserve for themselves the right to pierce their proposed rollback anytime they can round up 14 legislators. All this does is to subject the legislators to the pressure of special interest groups. And as we have seen too many times in the past, they succumb to this pressure and add the extra dollars that drive the budget up and up and up.

Ladies and gentlemen of the legislature, you passed a law that called for a tax cap on the 1985 budget. If you

had lived up to the letter and the spirit of the law, the total property tax levy in 1989 would have been \$248 million. The general fund property tax levy for 1988 would have been \$1.12 per thousand full value. Under the budget that you passed, the tax levy was \$3.63 per thousand full value, or \$2.51 more than the intent of the law called for.

You put this levy on the people of Suffolk County because you spent \$119 million more than you were allowed to. Ladies and gentlemen, you made the law, you passed it. When you ran for re-election you promised you would live by the laws of the land. You gave us your word and you broke it. You have six months to fix it. You simply have to figure out how you are going to cut about \$100 million out of your billion dollar budget.

Hey guys! This is less than ten percent. Figure out how you are going to do it and you may stand a chance for re-election. Eliminate the 14 vote pierce, take away this temptation to flirt with disaster. You have already proven you can't be trusted with this responsibility. Do this and we may remember in November. Fail to fix what you broke and we definitely will remember you in November.

And why not?

IF FOR ANY REASON,

**SUFFOLK LIFE**

NEWSPAPERS

IS NOT DELIVERED TO YOUR HOME OR P.O. BOX  
ON WEDNESDAY BY THE MAILMAN,

PLEASE CALL

**516-369-0800**

# School taxes take the biggest bite

The biggest portion of the real estate bill you pay is for school taxes. Depending upon the district, it ranges from 60 to 70 percent of each real estate tax dollar.

Towns which provide government, recreation, code enforcement, building and planning departments and, on the East End, police and justice courts, amount to approximately 15 percent of the total real estate tax bill.

The county provides the governmental functions and includes health, welfare, Suffolk County police, district courts and a whole host of other departments. These result in 15 to 20 percent of the real estate tax bill.

Schools which educate children from kindergarten through twelfth grade are responsible for 60 to 70 percent of the total tax assessment you pay. In addition to the funds raised through real estate taxes, schools receive, on an average, 42 percent of their budgets through state aid. State aid comes from the state government, which raises most of its tax base through personal and corporate income taxes and sales taxes.

Suffolk County schools spend more on their students than almost any other place in the nation. In 1986-87, the last year facts were available, the average cost of educating a student in Suffolk County was \$7,903. Most districts in 1988-89 increased spending by 10 to 15 percent. Many are proposing increases of five to 15 percent in this year's budget. Suffolk has spent 130 percent more than the average in other states on education.

The difference in per pupil spending by Suffolk's school districts and by those in upstate New York has grown substantially. Suffolk's spending was 15 percent higher in 1978-79, 22 percent higher in 1983-84 and 27

percent higher in 1986-87.

Suffolk's school districts increased spending per pupil by 38 percent from 1983-84 to 1986-87, and by 140 percent from 1978-79 to 1986-87. The cost of educating a student in Suffolk ranged from \$5,900 to \$33,000 in 1986-87; the national average was \$3,752.

The State Board of Regents mandates basic educational requirements that must be given by all schools. This curriculum, if strictly followed, covers the basics of math, English, social studies, language, sciences and health. A student who absorbs this education is able to graduate with a Regents diploma and should be able to get into most colleges.

Local boards of education, elected by the people, are charged with making up a specific budget for each district. In planning this budget and the curriculum to be offered by the district, the board is allowed to add courses and programs in addition to those mandated by the state.

These courses include, but are not limited to, such items as extra reading classes, additional science and language courses, additional music and art courses, full days of kindergarten, busing for everyone and the list goes on. It goes on because small groups of individuals make demands on the school board for additional programs.

Teacher unions demand not only additional courses and smaller class sizes, but aides and specific departments that comprise the educational package of the district. Each time the board of education adds electives to the educational package, they must follow the mandates of the state; they must be given according to the guidelines and at the salaries negotiated through contract. These additional electives are responsible

for 30 to 40 percent of the schools' expenditures.

The remaining 10 to 15 percent is purely for electives that are automatically eliminated if a school budget is knocked down. These cover extra-curricular sports, music, plays, field trips, some busing, adult education, summer school and other people sensitive electives.

All school districts will be having school board elections and the budgets will be presented at hearings and subsequently voted on. Every resident of the school district who is registered with the county board of elections or just the school board, is eligible to vote. Every resident should vote, for he or she is voting on 60 to 70 percent of his or her real estate tax bill as well as where over 40 percent of their state income and sales taxes are spent.

For years many Long Island school districts have experienced declining enrollment. With fewer students to educate, school boards have come up with budgets that have shown increases at two to three times the rate of inflation. School boards have cut class sizes and added programs. Suffolk's spending per pupil was more than double the national average in 1986-87.

In 1987-88, all of Suffolk's school districts had fewer pupils per classroom teacher than the national average for the previous year. This appeased the teacher unions, but left the taxpayers to foot the bill.

Education has always been a sacred cow that few of us have been willing to tamper with. The best is not good enough for our kids. Now Mom and Pop and the rest of Long Island are finding it very difficult to remain in their homes. Worse yet, for the investment we have made in education, we have not seen significant increases in the quality of

education or the product that our school systems are turning out.

We do have administrators and superintendents making \$80,000 to \$100,000 per year, more than we pay our congressmen. A past member of the Northport School Board stated that they have a teacher making more than \$70,000 a year. The median teacher salary there in 1987-88 was \$43,600, compared to the \$26,704 national average for the year before. On top of their huge salaries, both administrators and teachers receive a third again as much in fringe benefit packages that few who are not paid by the taxpayers dare even dream about.

This year when you go to your district's budget hearing, demand that the administration give you a comparison based on enrollment this year versus five years ago, this year versus 10 years ago. What did your district spend then per student? What are they spending now? This week's Suffolk Life has two pages of statistical tables to help you ask these questions.

For the last several years, we have had an inflation rate of under five percent. Has your school district been spending beyond the five percent rate? Is this year's budget higher than the five percent rate of inflation? Has your enrollment gone up, which would require additional expenditures, or has your enrollment gone down, which should reflect a decrease in the actual total dollars spent? Are our children being educated 130% better than the national norm?

When you look at what your town and county government provides for its 30 to 40 percent share of your tax dollar, in comparison you should ask how well are our school districts doing for us and vote accordingly.

And why not?

# How New York State is the tax capital

Everyone complains about taxes; New Yorkers and particularly Suffolk County residents should complain long and loud.

Suffolk Life has spent a considerable amount of time trying to figure out just where we are. Working with the United States Census Bureau figures for the years 1986-1987 (these are the latest available and do not reflect increases for 1988-89), we present to you the following, which is a fairly comprehensive picture of just where we stand.

New York State and its local municipalities raise 50.7 percent more in taxes than the average state in the nation. On a per capita basis, the United States average for local and state taxes is \$2,989. In New York State, the per capita average is \$4,507.

The total spending by state and local governments is 47 percent higher per capita in New York State than the nation's average. The United States average is

\$3,185. In New York it is \$4,683.

New York State government spends on state government 42.4 percent more than the nation's average. The nation's average is \$1,882. New York's is \$2,665.

New York State's expenditures by city and local governments is 56.2 percent higher than the nation's average. United States average is \$1,996. New York State is \$3,117.

In Suffolk County, we spend 14.2 percent more than other counties and local governments in New York State outside of New York City. The statewide average is \$2,397; Suffolk's average is \$2,738.

On education, New York State spends 33.4 percent more than the nation's average of \$644 per capita. New York State spends \$861 per capita. In Suffolk, County, our average per capita expenditure for education is \$1,480 or 72 percent more than the state average, or 130 percent more than the nation's average. There are those who say that this figure is misleading. Compare

our state expenditures to the surrounding states. We did, and the New York State average is 23.9 percent higher than the average spent in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut and Vermont. Their per capita expenditure on education ranges from \$633 to \$756.

These statistics are not pretty from a taxpayers' standpoint. When we look around New York State, at the County of Suffolk, our towns and our school districts by comparison to other areas, we realize how badly we are being shortchanged.

Part of the reason is we pay higher salaries here in New York State, particularly here on Long Island where the cost of living for all is higher. This is only part of the reason.

It's not only what we pay our people, it's who is getting paid what and what are they doing for their earnings. You don't have to be a financial wizard to see that New York State, Suffolk County, our towns and school

districts are overstaffed with high-priced department heads for whom there is no function.

A good example was County Executive Patrick Halpin's staff when he came into office. He paid numerous people salaries far beyond what they had been making in their prior jobs, sometimes, as much as twenty to thirty thousand dollars more. The salaries he paid were not in relation to the people's experience, nor, more important, our ability to pay for it.

In our school districts we have superintendents making over \$100,000 a year, with assistants making just under this. It goes on all the way down the ladder. We see it in our every day life as you ride down the road and see four trucks and eight men repairing a single pothole. The pothole could be fixed by one man and he wouldn't be distracted by having someone else to shoot the bull with.

Cont. on page 8

# *Willmott's and Why-Notes*

David J. Willmott, Editor

## **New York State is tax capital . . .**

Cont. from page 5

We recently received a letter from a retired New York City Police officer. He compared the management staff of the Suffolk Police Department with that of New York City. His illustrations pointed out that our staffing of management is twice that of the city and the productivity expected of the men is less. These are only a few casual examples of why we pay so much in taxes.

We have not even touched on the duplication between school districts and towns,

towns and counties and the county and state. We can blame the politicians for getting us in this mess but in reality, we are to blame. We didn't complain, we didn't raise our voices, we didn't organize, we didn't fight back.

Things are changing in Suffolk County. Several taxpayer organizations have been formed, one in particular, Tax PAC. Tax PAC has been formed slowly and carefully so that it will have longevity. It is a non-partisan, not-for-profit Taxpayer Political Action Committee. It has an umbrella

county organization and local chapters have been formed or are being formed in each of the 10 towns.

Using the organizational structure of a political party, Tax PAC plans on having at least one representative in every election district. It is the intention of Tax PAC to monitor every local spending and taxing entity. It is Tax PAC's goal to roll back taxes to those of the nation's average. It is an ambitious goal but a realistic goal.

Why should we be paying more for government than the rest of the nation? Ask

yourself this, are our school children being educated 130 percent better than the rest of the children in the nation? Is the highest-paid police force in the nation able to make you feel more secure in your home than any other place in the nation? Are the benefits we receive directly from government 50 percent better than those received in other parts of the country?

The answers are, quite simply, no. So why are we paying for it? You will be pondering this question for years to come unless you decide to unite with the rest of the citizens. We encourage you to join Tax PAC now. Volunteer whatever services you can provide. Unite with your fellow taxpayers to make government affordable and accountable.

If you haven't already done so, fill out the form published on page 19 and mail it to Tax PAC, c/o P.O. Box 167, Riverhead, NY, 11901.

Any why not?

**SEEING RED  
CAN BE  
A VALUABLE**

**1st ANNUAL LONG ISLAND  
RV SHOW  
MAY 5, 6, & 7, 1989  
AT BROOKHAVEN AIRPORT, SHIRLEY**