

Common sense, emotional uproar

The usual emotional rhetoric of the hard core environmentalists has become an uproar of protest over what some environmentalists claim is an effort by the Riverhead Town Board to kill the pine barrens legislation. They're wrong!

Southampton, Brookhaven and Riverhead towns have voted conditional support of the general principles of the Central Pine Barrens Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Each town placed special conditions upon that support. All three towns stipulated that the State of New York provides a minimum of \$10 million in 1994, and an additional \$10 million in 1995, for the acquisition of priority property within the core area. All agree, as does the Pine Barrens Commission, that the acquisition of property should be the principal preservation device.

Southampton Town added a condition that legislation pending in the New York State Legislature to extend the deadline for the final adoption of the land use plan and generic impact statement be approved. That legislation has since been passed.

Brookhaven Town's conditions included an extension of the deadline, a stipulation that 75% of the land within the core area be protected through acquisition, eligibility of development right transfer credits, and the permitted use of certain recreational uses with the core area.

Riverhead Town, in the process of taking title to the former Grumman property at Calverton, included a provision that the pine barrens legislation be amended to "incorporate the intent of

the commission that the redevelopment of the Calverton Naval Weapons Testing Facility (that land within the fence) shall not be considered development for the purposes of the implementation of the Central Pine Barrens Comprehensive Land Use Plan..." The Riverhead Town condition stated: "It is the intent of this condition to exclude development of the Calverton Facility from the jurisdiction of the Central Pine Barrens Commission."

Angry outburst

It is that stipulation, that the pine barrens legislation be revised to carve out the Grumman land, as was the proposed Breslin retail complex in the Yaphank area, that drew the immediate ire of the hard core pine barrens proponents. Richard Amper of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society was so angry that Riverhead dared suggest the pine barrens legislation, which he was involved in shaping, be revised in any way he fired off a letter to Senator Kenneth LaValle, senate sponsor of the bill. Amper asked that "Given the Town of Riverhead's insistence on holding the Pine Barrens Plan hostage to its effort to extract unrelated concessions from the state, I wonder if you'd consider entertaining an amendment to the pine barrens law that would exempt Riverhead's approval as a requirement for implementing the act." Translation: They won't do it the way we want them to do it so we should take away their constitutional right to control property within their town. Astounding!

Amper further declared that "Home rule requires home responsibility." From our perspective, the Riverhead Town Board was very responsible, far more so than the emotional outbursts from Amper and others who have condemned Riverhead for their action.

Face some facts

Let's face some facts: first, the pine barrens legislation is not legitimately based on water preservation. Its primary goals are open space and habitat. Frankly, there's nothing wrong with open space or habitat. There are many of us who have lived here all our lives, including some members of the Riverhead Town Board, who value both. What makes the environmental group think they alone are concerned about the precious resources we have all enjoyed? What gives them the right to hold themselves up as the saviors of our land when they cloak their actions as "water preservation" knowing full well their motives are otherwise?

The motivation of the Riverhead Town Board is focused on economic survival. The future of the Grumman site is the key local economic generator that could keep our economy alive, provide jobs we need, and tax revenues that will ease the plight of the taxpayer.

Luring our jobs

In recent days the governors of two states and a key economic development official of another have reached out to local business firms in an effort to lure them to their states. Governor Edwards is holding a Louisiana luncheon at the Waldorf-Astoria on April 19 to provide details on the advantages of Louisiana as a business location.

The pitch of Governor George Allen of Virginia was even stronger in a March 8 letter to business firms. "If you are

considering a company expansion, a start-up, or perhaps moving an entire operation to a new location, I am confident you could improve your bottom line substantially by operating in Virginia," he said, adding: "By doing so, you could cut your state corporate income taxes up to 33%; you could eliminate almost 75% of your workers' compensation costs; you could cut your health cost up to 76%."

"And that is only the beginning," Governor Allen declared. "Add further savings in the areas of transportation, wages, electric power, and construction, and we would project a new cost savings between 12% and 23%. We would like to show you how." Allen offered to send two special representatives to talk to the business leaders at their own offices during the week of April 3."

That's what we're fighting against here on Long Island. Businesses and jobs are being lured out of New York State on an almost daily basis. Our taxes are high, workman's compensation costs are hurting businesses, our electric rates the highest in the nation, and, as Governor Allen notes, the corporate taxes and health costs are an additional burden. Add to that the environmental hard core that seeks to impose more and more restrictions, and we've filled the pail of woe to spilling over. To make matters worse, we're getting no help from our Albany legislators to resolve these problems.

Common sense

Changing the pine barrens legislation to exclude the inside-the-fence Grumman land is not the huge calamity the Richard Ampers of the area claim it is. The 3,200 acres outside the fence, which fall within the core and compatible growth areas, are protected by the federal law giving title to Riverhead Town, and the town board unanimously endorses that provision. Riverhead Town's position is a common sense effort to protect, insure and encourage economic growth for a large segment of this county. If the legislation and map had been drawn up with consideration of a needed balance of growth and preservation, it wouldn't have been included at the start.

The pine barrens legislation has many serious flaws which have not yet been fully addressed. The property rights of land owners within the core area is given lip service, but no outright guarantees of fair and equitable treatment. The transfer of development rights (TDR) is proclaimed to be a vital part of the plan, but planning experts acknowledge TDR has no proven track record of success.

The verbage of the legislation is not so precious that it can't be changed to make necessary improvements now and in the future. Artificial deadlines that have little merit, and a no-change, no-compromise attitude will make this a great place to live with open space and the birds, bees and tiger salamanders, but drive up the financial burden which will drive more businesses, and ultimately, more residents away in even larger numbers.

It's time to stop the wailing and get on with the business of helping the both the environment and the taxpayers who are expected to pay the bills in their own lives, and for the desires of environmental egotists as well.

And why not?

Privatize the LIRR

The Long Island Railroad (LIRR) is a bureaucratic nightmare that does not serve the public well. It is time to seriously consider changing the way it is operated.

The railroad has two main missions: first to move commuters and the second to move freight. The railroad barely gets passing grades for moving people. Independent buses do it better.

When it comes to moving freight, it is not even in the ballpark. Independent trucking companies have garnered 98% of the freight movement business even though trucking is more expensive.

A report recently was issued advocating the privatization of the LIRR freight operation. Would privatization do the job any better? Let's be realistic, could it do it any worse?

The railroad, under the State Metropolitan Transportation Authority, has lost 98% of the business. Can private enterprise resolve the bottleneck of bringing freight onto Long Island quickly and

inexpensively? Can they improve delivery and reduce the cost for Long Islanders living on an island? Can they get by the unions that have paralyzed the LIRR? Can they eliminate the needless work rules and bring efficiency to the operation?

If there ever was an area of government that cries out for privatization, it is the Long Island Railroad. While looking at privatization, why not look at the waste of running trains to Eastern Long Island? Couldn't the railroad right-of-ways be used by buses to move people more effectively and efficiently? What is the cost of maintaining the miles of track, the stations and the equipment? What would be the outcome of having the railroad right-of-ways devoted solely to bus and truck traffic?

We are in a new age, a new world. It's time to take a fresh look at our old ways.

And why not?

Watching for leadership

The Dole challenge

Senator Robert Dole wants to be President of the United States. Maybe he should be, but, then again, maybe he does not have the ability.

Dole is the majority leader of the United States Senate. He is House Speaker Newt Gingrich's counterpart in that body.

The Republican Congress signed "A Contract with America." It was not only a platform specifically outlining items that they intended to act upon, but a pledge to do so. Republican senatorial hopefuls and incumbents did not sign onto the contract. Gingrich and other members of congress have rapidly been working themselves through the contract at an amazing speed. As they complete their agenda, the bills go to the senate, where they are debated and voted upon.

This should be Dole's shining hour, demonstrating his ability to enact passage within the senate. This is his plat-

form, to bring attention to himself as a leader and an enactor of bold, new ideas for a new, more responsive America.

Last week, Dole stumbled badly in failing to find the last necessary vote for the balanced budget amendment. That defeat is not an end, for Dole has promised he will bring this measure up again, thus having another opportunity to demonstrate his leadership.

As the other items of the contract work their way into the senate, citizens and voters will be watching not only for their passage, but for the leadership required to reconnect Americans with their government. Dole's future will be determined by how well he is able to deliver as the senate majority leader. If the provisions of the house's contract with America are passed, diluted or fail, Dole's fortunes will rise or fall.

And why not?



The Albany seats of power

New York State government has three power bases: the Governor's Office, the Assembly and the Senate.

In the Assembly, the two major parties are represented, but the Democrats overwhelmingly control this branch. The Republicans don't even make up a loyal opposition.

The Democratic strength comes from New York City and other large cities throughout the state. The Senate is controlled by the Republicans. The city Democrats make up the mi-

nority of the senators, the majority coming from the suburbs, with the largest suburban block the Long Island delegation. Although the delegation does not have the power to pass legislation on its own, it does have the power to defeat legislation by joining with the Democrats. This little secret is well-known within the hallowed halls of Albany, but is not recognized outside of these quarters. Having the numerical power to defeat gives this delegation a huge opportunity to make sure their agendas

are given a fair hearing, that the bills that they support are brought to the floor for a vote.

The Long Island Senate delegation is the fourth power in Albany. Unfortunately, this power goes along to get along. Hidden away in Albany they do not face or confront their constituents. In the past, they have given lip service to their constituents' desires and requests. They proposed legislation their constituents wanted, but then were able to hide behind

their claim that the Assembly would not pass it.

Politics in Albany is the art of compromise. In the past, it was the Republicans who had to do the compromising because the governor's seat was controlled by the Democrats. The Democrats had two out of three of the branches. In 1995, chairs were switched, putting the Republicans in control of the Senate and the State House. The Democrats are only left with the Assembly. Yet, as much as things change, they do not change at all, or at least, this is the perception that is radiating from Albany.

The Senate now has the pivotal strength that the Assembly displayed, but they do not appear to be using it to Long Island's advantage. We are completing 100 days of state government as we are completing 100 days of the new congress in Washington. We have not seen any of the dynamics in Albany that we have seen in Washington.

The two main issues facing Long Island have yet to be addressed: the unaffordable utility rates forced upon us by LILCO and the much needed reorganization of the Public Service Commission, making it more user friendly and to make the utilities more competitive. Another vital issue begging for a solution to the cost of education and the devastating impact it has on real estate. These issues have been talked to death. Lack of reform has long been blamed on former Governor Mario Cuomo and the Assembly.

We have a new governor, we have a Republican-controlled Senate. The problem is no longer the Assembly, it is the system, it is the Long Island Senatorial delegation. They have an opportunity to produce and bring the necessary reform. They can't hide under any more rocks. It is time they stand up and produce.

If you can't lead, get out of the way. If you are not earning your salaries, you don't deserve to be our representatives.

And why not?

Is baseball still alive?

We fondly remember the time before television, the time of imagination, the time of innocence. As youngsters, baseball was everyone's pastime. We played sandlot ball daily. Our older brothers strived to make the high school teams.

Hot summer days were spent in the shade listening to those newfangled portable radios. Play-by-play, the games were broadcast. In our minds, we envisioned Ruth, DiMaggio, Robinson and Reese doing the impossible. That's when baseball was king. If you were lucky enough, once or twice during the season you would trek into the city and for a buck you could buy a bleacher seat and be part of the real game. Baseball fever built to a high pitch at World Series time.

With the advent of television, our imaginations dulled as the images took their place. Big business took over. Costs soared. The little guy, the fan, was squeezed out of the process. Players started demanding astronomical salaries, and management paid them. Performance did not improve; excitement waned. As television started eliminating games from regular view-

ers and demanded retribution in the form of penalty payments on paid television or premium channels on cable, interest dramatically declined.

Today, outside of the ardent fans, most people don't give a tiddly dink. Baseball is dead as our national pastime. This past year's prolonged baseball strike has left even the most ardent fans disillusioned. We expect attendance to drop down and TV ratings wash out. Greed killed baseball. It deserved to die. The fun, the emotion, the loyalty and the excitement are gone.

Recently, Frank Boulton of Brightwaters once again floated the idea of the county backing and funding a baseball stadium in Suffolk County.

A few years ago, he was able to energize some members of the Suffolk County Legislature. He had them all but convinced that it was a good idea for the county to build and maintain a stadium for him. He wanted to bring a semi-pro, major league, farm team to play here. Some legislators were willing to invest and gamble the taxpayers' money even though there was little to justify this expenditure.

The Mets put a squash on the idea, as major league team rules do not allow for a farm team to play within the market of an established club.

Boulton now proposes to bring a new rinky dink league to the county if the taxpayers will build him a new stadium. Give us a break! We have too many legitimate, pressing needs within this county that are not being addressed to invest in this foolhardiness.

If Boulton feels his idea is so swell, let him go for it, lock, stock and barrel. If he can find investors who believe they can profit by building and maintaining a stadium, and fund a team on their own, give them full encouragement.

The county might consider arranging for a tax abatement or even some Industrial Development Agency (IDA) loans that do not require the full faith backing of the government. Anything more than this is a waste of taxpayers' investment and should be dismissed out of hand.

Baseball is not the attraction it was; it never will be again. Greed won, the fans lost.

And why not?

Fact and fiction

Support meaningful firearm laws

The National Rifle Association (NRA) is made up of the bad guys. They are opposed to all gun control laws. They are a bunch of wackos and kooks who have manipulated the governmental system, beat up legislators and are a right wing organization. That's the image that the liberal media and gun control advocates have depicted.

Would it surprise you to learn that the NRA has actively been a lead proponent for gun control? They advocate gun control for people who have no legitimate credentials for a gun, the criminal element or those who would use a firearm to endanger another person.

The NRA has been a strong proponent for severe sentencing of persons convicted of using any kind of a firearm in the commission of a crime. They want stringent laws passed that require mandatory sentences for anyone convicted of having a firearm in their possession during the commission of a crime. Furthermore, they have demanded sentences for the discharge of a firearm, a law that is currently on the books. They are advocates of the death penalty for anyone who uses a gun illegally and kills someone in the commission of a crime. Do these concepts sound like they have come from a bunch of kooks?

NRA members come from every walk of life. They are familiar with firearms and want them kept out of the hands of the criminal element. They appreciate the devastation a firearm can create. They want mandatory training for all who wish to use firearms for legitimate purposes. They believe the firearm owners should be educated about their guns and how to safely operate and use them for protection and sporting purposes.

The NRA believes in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. They are not a bunch of pantywaists who will lay down. Yes, they have an educational mission and a lobbying arm.

They petition Congress and become involved in the political process, the same as advocates for social, education and health organizations.

The NRA supports good government, responsive elected officials who listen to all sides and when they are educated, through debate and information, will make rational decisions.

The NRA supports what most of us want, security in our homes, freedom to move around our streets without fear, fellow law-abiding citizens with respect for each other and the laws of the land which govern us.

What's wrong with that?
And why not?

Yes, you can make a difference

During the next two months, school districts will hold elections for new school board members. At the same time, they present their budgets and ask for voter approval.

It is far more important to be diligent in selecting the school board members than it is to vote on the budget. The members of the school board, or trustees as they are called in some districts, are the folks who put the budget together. They are also the ones who approve revotes if the district residents turn down the budget.

The school board members are the people responsible for developing the curriculum over and above that which is required by the State Education Department which leads to a Regents diploma. They are the folks who are responsible for 70% of your real estate tax burden.

Too many school boards in the past have developed a curriculum over and above the state requirements, one that fills the needs of a limited number of students but adds to the cost of education in your district. These electives cover over 50% of the school taxes you

are asked to pay. Once the good folks on the school board include the curriculum in the budget, how it is given and the costs are then covered by the state mandates. If there no electives, there are no high cost mandates.

The teacher unions and the educational establishment, including the administration, hand pick candidates to run for school board positions. They run their campaigns, contribute heavily in cash and manpower to their campaign efforts. All too often, these people come right out of the educational establishment. We have even seen cases where school board members are teachers and administrators. Of course, they are not from the same district that they are directly benefiting from—they are from adjacent districts. But we all know how the game is played. It's called parity. What one district gives, the other district is expected to get.

In the Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) reports concerning settlement recommendations in districts that are an impasse, the PERB selected arbitrator constantly refers to the other districts in recommending that the af-

fect district go along with the teachers' and administrators' demands.

If you are tired of paying huge real estate taxes driven by your school costs, take the time to find out something about the candidates. See who is backing them. Be particularly skeptical of candidates that are being backed by teacher unions and others from within the educational establishment. Don't be duped into thinking that if a candidate is backed by the PTA or the PTO that they are a good candidate. PTOs and PTAs have been infiltrated and often are nothing more than a pawn of the educational establishment. They are used to do their lobbying and the bidding of those who will directly benefit from the educational friendly school board members who don't give a damn about the taxpayers or the kids' education.

On Long Island, we are paying close to three times the nation's norm to educate our students. Our students are coming out of high school poorly educated. Too many cannot even read on an eighth grade level. They can only do math on a seventh grade level. Even

the top students who take SATs and ACTs fall below the nation's norm, and these norms have decreased substantially over the last 10 years. Our colleges are forced to give remedial courses to bring college entrants up to par. Students wind up wasting up to a year in these programs, and the parents are footing the bill.

The educational establishment has had to lower test standards so that more students would appear to have higher scores because of the deficiencies in American educational standards.

It's time to stand up, to take our school boards back. Take our schools back by taking control of the school boards. It's time for all citizens to demand a better quality of education for our students, at a price we can afford to pay.

Carefully look over the qualifications and the candidates' reasons for seeking school board positions. Vote intelligently. Take part in the system that allows each one of us to determine the quality of education and its cost.

And why not?

The dream, not the possession

Most of us have had something stolen from us at one time or another. Few of us have stolen, and we do not know what is in the mind of those who do.

A few years back, we indulged ourselves and bought a small Archilles. These boats are affectionally called "rubber ducks." They basically are pontoons with additional air chambers and a transom. We powered ours with an eight-horsepower Nissen outboard motor.

The rubber duck gave us the freedom of getting out onto the water, exploring backyards on canals, uninhabited islands and just being free. It was the one purchase we have made that we truly received recurring enjoyment from.

A week ago last Thursday, we used it in Florida. It was a great day. The weather cooperated, and things could not have been better. We secured the duck at its berthing place in front of the condo, under a light. The next morning, the "Wee Knot" was gone. Not only had the boat been taken, but so had a piece of us, our dreams,

our memories.

Your first reaction is anger. You have been trespassed upon, violated. This little boat represented so much more than just a possession. Replacement? Sure, but things will never be the same.

As we calmed down, we thought of those who had taken it. Was it a theft to order? Some kids looking for a joy ride? Somebody in need of feeding a habit? Maybe someone desperately needed food, looking to convert the boat to ready cash? What was on their minds?

Did they think of the ramifications that they had caused? Did they think of the hurt that their transgression caused? Did they care?

We thought of our many friends whose homes had been burglarized, some vandalized, others losing family heirlooms, jewelry and other items that commercially were worth far more than the value the thieves would receive.

Why own if you can't protect? Why pay the taxes for police forces if they cannot maintain law and order? Why pay judges and the judicial system to

produce turnstile justice? Why don't those who steal or commit other crimes have to face the punishment and the pain they have meted out? To what end do we have to go to protect our lives and our possessions from the lawless?

We realize that the crime that was

committed upon us was minute in comparison to the suffering caused to many others. But it has started us thinking, and maybe you should too, in determining to what lengths we will go to in the future to protect ourselves.

And why not?

Making bad worse

The one thing almost everybody out here dreads is getting a jury notice to appear in Federal Court in Brooklyn. The Eastern District Federal Court covers New Jersey, New York and Connecticut. There are local federal court houses here on Long Island in Hauppauge and Uniondale. The main federal court is still in Brooklyn.

The jury pool this court traditionally has pulled from has been the metropolitan area. Because of the heavy population of blacks and Hispanics in the metropolitan area, the juries are often of color. The judges and the attor-

neys want more balanced juries and have now decided to make up the jury pool for the Brooklyn facility from the entire Eastern District Court region. More people are going to be called to serve from the suburbs and rural areas in the tri-state region.

What kind of jurist are you going to get when they start out ticked off, at 5 a.m., facing commuter traffic, extremely limited parking, fear of being on the streets of the city, and not compensated adequately for their time or their costs?

How awake will these jurors be who have spent two, three or four hours commuting, and are then expected to sit through boring testimony and in hostile conditions? If the court decides to expand the jury pool, they must provide adequate compensation to the jurors, realistic commutation reimbursement, adequate housing and meal allowances for those who find it inconvenient and have unreasonable commuting distances.

Federal trials are often long and drawn out. Few of the jurors have the luxury of time to give. The judges, the lawyers and the court personnel are all well reimbursed for their time and their dedication, but the jurors aren't. The system has to be changed so that the most important aspect of the trial, the members of the jury, are compensated on par with the judges and the lawyers.

And why not?

Promises kept

The greatest 100 days

For a long time, we have felt that our government no longer can work. Over the 35 years we have been an avid observer of government, we have noted the slowness, the lack of responsiveness and the creaking bureaucracy that paralyzed government.

We take our hat off to Newt Gingrich and to members of congress for restoring our faith in democracy. The Republican congressional majority pledged that, if elected, they would

bring their Contract with America to the floor for debate and vote during the first 100 days of Congress.

The contract contained 10 major issues that had been studied, discussed and debated previously, with no action. All 10 issues were brought up for discussion, debated and voted upon, as was promised. This is incredible. It's amazing. It does not make any difference whether you agree or disagree with the individual articles. The fact of the matter is the mission was accom-

plished. Gingrich and the Republican congress proved that the system could work, that American democracy is not stalled. If ideas are right, they can be brought to the forefront, flushed out, and action can be taken on them.

During the next 100 days, all eyes will be on the Senate to see if they have the will to be a pro-active legislative body, or will continue to slosh along as usual and accomplish nothing in the end.

And why not?

Yes, cut SCWA cost 25%!

One of the highest cost factors the Suffolk County Water Authority (SCWA) has to deal with is for electricity, which costs them about \$12 million a year, about 26% of its total operating costs. The Suffolk County Water Authority is attempting to get the state to approve their importing electricity directly from the New York Power Authority, with the savings involved directly benefiting the water ratepayer.

If the state approves the SCWA request, the cost of electricity could drop to about four cents per kilowatt which, with reasonable wheeling charges, would knock down the cost of operating by about 25%. This savings would be passed on to the consumers, and be reflected in lower rates.

Who could be opposed to the ratepayers receiving a reduction in rates? Would you believe *Newsday*, who proclaim themselves the Long Island newspaper?

Newsday, in an April 10 editorial, argued that this is just a shell game. If the water authority is able to buy this cheap power and establish a model for other municipalities, the savings for the water authority would be built into higher rates that LILCO can charge all of us. This argument might hold some water if *Newsday* was as pure and clean as it might have the public believe. Most residents on Long Island are not aware that *Newsday* is the beneficiary of over 4,000 megawatts of cheap public power from NYPA. They engineered this windfall when Mario

Cuomo was governor. Of course, it didn't have anything to do with politics or political support. Or did it?

Newsday claimed the savings brought about by this power would allow them to create jobs here on Long Island. Not long after, the publication announced a downsizing and the elimination of over 600 positions. For the life of us, we cannot figure out how you promise the state you will not only keep but you will expand jobs by eliminating them.

If *Newsday* is sincere in their concern for Long Island, why don't they turn back their cheap power to the state? Let *Newsday* pay their fair share of the high-priced LILCO power and save Long Island ratepayers from the

fate they claim will befall them if the SCWA effort is successful. Every little bit helps. Can't *Newsday* do its part?

Several advertisers have contacted us and questioned why they are required to send payment to *Newsday* at a location out of the state rather than their Melville office, where *Newsday* headquarters for Long Island are located. Everyone knows that the labor rates outside of the state for back room functions are a heck of a lot cheaper than they are here on Long Island. Did any of the jobs that were promised for low cost NYPA power wind up elsewhere? In another state?

Anything that can be done to reduce the cost of living on the Island should be done. And reduced rates for public water is a good start. If municipalities can break out of the LILCO yoke that is strangling them, they should try to do so.

The Suffolk County Water Authority serves a good portion of Suffolk County. Local water companies serve another big chunk that could possibly also buy their electricity wholesale, avoiding the middleman, LILCO. If they are successful, private enterprise will not be far to follow and you can bet that once the mechanism is in place, residents will be demanding equal and fair treatment.

LILCO fears any form of competition, any break on the stranglehold that they have on Long Island. *Newsday*, if it continues to be LILCO's mouthpiece, may well suffer the same kind of downfall and image that LILCO has so arrogantly cultivated.

State Senator Kenneth LaValle (R-Selden) and Assemblyman Paul Harenberg (D-Oakdale) have joined in the bipartisan legislation that would benefit SCWA ratepayers. It is good legislation that directly helps the people. It deserves the support of all state legislators.

And why not?

Benefit or boondoggie?

The Town of Riverhead is sitting on a powder keg; the way it blows could either be a disaster or a phenomenal stroke of fortune for the residents.

Northrop Grumman is in the process of dismantling the Grumman operation in Calverton. Grumman has utilized this facility for over 30 years. They pay the Town of Riverhead \$1,200,000 in lieu of taxes. In February 1996, when they officially vacate the property and return it to the United States Navy, they will pay no further taxes. On the date of the turnover, the Navy is scheduled to turn over the property to the Riverhead Community Development Agency.

The property consists of some of the longest runways on the East Coast, which were necessary for the testing of jets. There are over 320 buildings on the property. The property itself consists of several thousand acres both inside and outside of the fence. Part of the property, although developed, lies within the pine barrens core designation.

The town is faced with two dilemmas. The pine barren legislation covers the Grumman property. This property is zoned for industrial use and, in fact, has been used industrially by Grumman. The town is insisting that the area within the fence be placed outside of the pine barren designation. They are asking for the same treatment that developer Wilbur Breslin received for his proposed mall in Yaphank, a project for which ground has not even been broken.

The environmental zealots are demanding that the industrial land within Grumman be included in the designation. The town, flexing its muscles, is refusing to sign onto the pine barren legislation. They are willing to allow the non-developed areas outside of the Grumman fence to be designated as pine barrens. But, they will not compromise on the interior acreage.

What the Town of Riverhead is offering is a reasonable compromise, one that should be embraced by all elected officials. We need jobs and a viable economy to support our environmental desires. Both arguments are legitimate.

Unfortunately, the one person who can make a difference, Senator Kenneth LaValle, is not listening. He adamantly refuses to change six words creating the compromise.

LaValle hasn't faced serious opposition in his re-election bids. Here is an issue that cries out for statesmanship,

and he acts like a politician. This stance could well earn him a primary in the Republican ranks or defeat in the general election.

The second problem the town is facing is finding the best partner for the development and utilization of the property. Riverhead is too small and is not equipped to commercially develop this property.

The town should be seeking proposals for this project, a multiple of proposals rather than the singular ideas of one firm. According to a town official, they have been approached by one firm. The firm is willing to pay \$1.5 million in lieu of taxes and 10% of the gross rentals. They want a 99-year lease without any kickers for inflation or ties to Riverhead's cost and tax structure. This \$1.5 million payment in lieu of taxes, when discounted over the 99 years they want, is a joke. To the residents of the Town of Riverhead, it won't be worth the paper it is written on.

Good, but could be better

Love the LIE's HOV lanes

It was a year ago that the Long Island Expressway (LIE) opened HOV lanes. Although we do not commute via the LIE, we do use the LIE to get to most points west of Riverhead.

We have experienced the parking lot syndrome, stalled in traffic or at best, creeping along at 15 to 20 per hour. We have long been a critic of the planners of this major east-west artery that is the lifeblood of Long Island.

Long Island, by the nature of its geography, is a nightmare, 140 miles long and as little as 14 miles wide, with a population of over 3,000,000. Because of its length, it is impossible to be a community, as the time required makes it unattractive for developing friendships, social acquaintances and poses a unique and difficult marketing problem for doing business.

Instead of Long Island being a com-

munity similar to those that surround most metropolitan areas, we are a series of small hamlets, small communities that are totally different from one another. The HOV lanes have improved our ability to get from one point to the other, quicker and safer. Unfortunately, Long Island's uniqueness does not bode well for these lanes. The majority of drivers cannot effectively car pool as we need our cars after we get to work for both work and pleasure.

The deal has to be fair to the entrepreneurs who will be Riverhead's partners, but more importantly, it has to be fair to Riverhead residents and its taxpayers. The town board would not be wise to collapse to either the pine barren zealots or the promoters. They should hold their own for the sake of their taxpayers.

And why not?

One morning last week, we used the HOV lanes. We loved them as we basically were the only car using them. There were a few far ahead of us, a few far behind us. The HOV lanes definitely have helped, the normal jam-ups were not there. We noted that most cars in the other lanes had a single occupant or were intermingled with truck traffic.

We wondered if any of our transportation experts had considered making

the HOV lanes solely for trucks or buses. Moving this commercial traffic out of the other three lanes might assist in moving people and freight more logically and expeditiously.

None of us like driving in front of, behind or beside a tractor trailer truck. Most of us have been cut off and involved in near-accidents as tractor trailers change lanes or swerve suddenly in front of us. Many of us have found ourselves accelerating as a tractor trailer breathes down our necks.

What do other drivers feel who use the LIE every day? Would they like to see the HOV lanes used exclusively for commercial traffic? How about the truckers, what is their opinion?

Let's give it some thought and explore the possibilities. The fourth lane on the LIE has helped. Could it be better?

And why not?

And why not?