

# Willmotts and Why-Not's

David J. Willmott, Editor

## Don't Count on the N.R.C.

Trust your government? Don't!

Most people of my generation were brought up to trust their government, to look to their government particularly the federal government, for protection. That, however, could be a serious mistake.

It's a common belief that the N.R.C. totally scrutinizes and makes sure atomic energy is safe, safe beyond a question of a doubt. Last Friday, the N.R.C. made a presentation to Governor Cuomo's Task Force investigating the Shoreham plant. The N.R.C. revealed to the Commission that they mostly depend upon the integrity of the utility to provide them with assurances the project is safe. They cannot assure, or guarantee, that a utility has built a plant totally according to specifications and has not taken short cuts.

They have maintained one resident inspector, sometimes two, during the construction stage of the plant, while, at times, there have been over 2,000 working on the facility. Two inspectors to check the work of 2,000 is hardly adequate to insure sufficient inspection during the on-going construction process.

The N.R.C. depends upon these inspectors, plus rare spot inspections by a six to eight man team of N.R.C. experts, to find potentially dangerous faults. The last time the N.R.C. conducted one of their surprise spot inspections, they charged LILCO with a Class 3 violation, which is of a serious nature and resulted in the N.R.C. fining LILCO \$40,000 for violating testing procedures on the diesel generators, which subsequently turned out to be defective. We understand that because of the N.R.C.'s actions, the generators are being replaced at a cost of several million dollars.

These diesel generators are an integral and vital back up system. If they were to malfunction at a crucial time, it could lead to a core meltdown, a worst type of accident. Are there other major potential problems with the plant which have not been uncovered by the rare N.R.C. inspections?

The N.R.C. tried to excuse this inefficiency by saying they are understaffed, underbudgeted, and, without saying so directly, indicated

the public relies on them too heavily.

The N.R.C.'s philosophy is to develop regulations the utility is expected to follow. If the utility does not follow these regulations, and the shortcomings are found, the N.R.C. will withhold an operating license. This is something they have never done before. The truth is, they have very limited supervision or control over the utilities, depending primarily upon the integrity and the credibility of the utility.

If the N.R.C. finds violations in procedures, they assess fines on the utility as punishment, but not on the management personally. The fines are paid by the utility and then worked, one way or another, back into the rate base, causing the ratepayers to finance the utility's incompetence. As long as they can justify the public pays the bill!

Of equal concern is the lack of formal education needed to become a licensed operator of a nuclear power plant. If you have a high school education, you are qualified to become a licensed operator of a nuclear power plant. You do not have to have a degree in engineering or physics, just a high school education. Most of the licensed operators for Shoreham have less than two month's hands-on experience in operating a nuclear power plant. What knowledge they do have is textbook experience and is basically limited to operating a simulator, a computer system that generally mimics the reactor controls, but is not an actual replica of the Shoreham Installation.

### Attention Congressman Carney:

My Dear Congressman,

You have been telling your constituents that you will be guided by whatever the N.R.C. concludes in regard to Shoreham. Obviously, you are negligent in your understanding of the N.R.C. They cannot perform adequate inspections to give you and your constituents any degree of assurance or guarantee that the plant has been built safe, is safe and will operate in a healthy manner.

We fully understand why you are totally favorable to the Shoreham

project and its parent, LILCO. Your contribution record reads like Who's Who from the utility field. You have accepted thousands upon thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from power and power related companies from across the country.

Regardless of what trough you are eating at, you have primary obligation to your constituents to provide for them an assurance of safety, and a responsibility for their good and welfare. After listening to the N.R.C., your favorite federal agency, say that they rely upon basic utility input and an adherence to their regulations to determine quality of construction and operations at Shoreham, your statement that the N.R.C. will guide you is a phony three dollar bill.

As a congressman with such a vital issue within the boundaries of your district, you should have been involved in this matter all along, rather than sit back and put the safety of our future in the hands of the N.R.C. You once said if there was "any doubt at all about safety" you would take an active role. Not long after the N.R.C., by the slim margin of one vote, said it

was okay for LILCO to apply for a low power license. Two of the five man board said "no" because of their concerns. Wasn't this enough doubt for you? Why didn't you speak out?

From what we have heard from the N.R.C. about their lack of control, your silence and lack of action makes you out as a total, dismal failure when it comes to protecting the safety of your constituents. You sold them out? You have lost the right of their trust! You have put their future safety in jeopardy, all the men, the women and the children who will be affected should there be an accident at Shoreham. How can you look into the eyes of your own children? Or look into the mirror and consider yourself a congressman who serves the people.

With wishy washy regulator agencies, and a congressman who doesn't give a damn, we are in deep trouble here on Long Island if Shoreham ever goes on line.

Perhaps it's time you made a choice. Resign and serve LILCO, or serve the public. You simply can't serve two masters.

And why not?

## Speak Your Piece

This past Monday there was a public hearing held in Hauppauge for the public to express their viewpoint to the Shoreham Commission on the Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant.

There will be two more hearings, one this coming Friday, August 5, from 2 to 5 p.m. and from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Nassau County Executive Building board room, in Mineola.

And following, on Tuesday August 16, the last public hearing will be held from 2 to 5 p.m., and from 7 to 9 p.m. in Riverhead, at the County Center.

These public hearings give the public an opportunity to present information they feel the commission should hear. We urge all who are concerned about Shoreham to turn out at these meetings. Your input is vital and will be taken into consideration in the final report to the governor.

Once or twice a week, between now and September, the commission will be meeting at various locations. The public is invited to these meetings as interested parties. They are not

allowed to participate, but can glean vital and useful knowledge from the testimony of invited witnesses. The public scrutiny of these meetings is important.

Unfortunately, too many of these meetings have been held off Long Island, inaccessible locations to Long Islanders, at Public Service Commission offices in Albany, and the U.D.C. building in New York City.

Dr. John Marburger, the chairman of the Shoreham Task Force Commission, probably does not understand the desire of the public to be able to observe these meetings. A number of calls from interested parties here on Long Island requesting that they be held on Long Island at a location convenient to Long Islanders, with advanced notice to the public, might persuade him to keep the hearings where they affect the people the most. His number is 246-5940.

If you are interested in attending, give him a call.

And why not?

### Point of view

## LILCO rates and Shoreham breed search for 'miracles'

By LOU GRASSO

The high cost of electrical power in the Long Island region has caused some interesting developments in areas of government which must, by their dismal track records, share in the blame for the problem that now exists. However, in trying to find solutions to this financial dilemma, too many of our public officials are turning to "miracle" solutions which, in the long run, are meaningless and will thrust a larger burden on the shoulders of the public.

Case in point: When LILCO applied for a 56.5 per cent rate increase to recoup the staggering costs of the Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant, officials began to look for a miracle. The immediate impact could be lessened, they reasoned, if the costs were spread out over a longer period of time, similar to spreading out mortgage payments over 20 years, instead of ten. Thus the "phase-in" theory was developed. The phase-in over a longer period will lower the payments, but the final cost will be higher

because interest costs will continue to mount.

LILCO has proposed a three year phase-in, the Public Service Commission suggests a four year plan, while Albany legislators recently approved a ten year version. The ten year delayed impact proposal went down the tubes last week when Governor Mario Cuomo vetoed the bill. In so doing, Cuomo said: "I will not sign a bill which merely pretends to help. It would create a false sense of security for ratepayers where none cont. on page 4

## SUFFOLK LIFE

NEWSPAPERS

and Suffolk County Life

Offices and Plant Located on Montauk Highway, Westhampton 288-3000 Classified Ads 288-6000  
Mailing address: Box 262, Westhampton N.Y. 11977 or Box 167, Riverhead, N.Y. 11901

Total circulation audited and verified in excess of  
210,000 Circulation Weekly

Suffolk Life is published in 19 market zone editions every Wednesday  
North Fork Patchogue Centereach Rocky Point  
Hampton East Medford Selden Port Jefferson  
Hampton West Holbrook, Holtsville Coram Three Village  
Madison Sayville Mastic Sherrill  
Westhampton Oakdale  
Monticello Ronkonkoma



Suffolk Life is an Official Newspaper of: Town of Southampton; Town of Islip; Surrogate Court; County of Suffolk; Rocky Point School District; Patchogue-Medford School District. Suffolk County Life published weekly each Wednesday, is an Official Newspaper of: Town of Islip; Town of Riverhead; Town of Brookhaven; Village of Port Jefferson.

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Subscription Rate: In Suffolk County: \$4.99 per year Outside Suffolk County: \$17.00 per year Newsstand single copy sales: 25¢ per issue Suffolk County Life: In Suffolk County \$4.99 per year; outside Suffolk County \$7.99 per year; newsstand single copy sales: 25¢ per issue

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