

The ducks didn't do it!

Brown tide has come back with a ferocity not seen before.

During the last 10 years, we have had both limited and severe outbreaks of this single cell microscopic phytoplankton. During the high outbreaks, the water turns a sickening brown; visibility is reduced to almost zero.

The lack of light kills the eel grass, which is an integral part of the food chain. The scallop crop is killed off; no new set is released or can survive. Fish die of starvation or migrate out of the area in search of food they can see and capture. Clams and other shellfish lose weight and, if the outbreak lasts long enough, they also die of starvation.

The outbreak originally was limited to the western portion of the Peconic Bay. Millions of dollars have been poured into research seeking the cause and a cure. Early speculation placed the blame on the Riverhead Town sewerage plant, where treated effluence is piped into the river and discharged. These discharges contain high concentrations of nitrogen, which was thought to be the cause of the rapid growth of the organism.

This theory was weakened when traces of brown tide were found above the falls in the Peconic River. There are three sets of falls between the Peconic River and Upper Mills in the Calverton/Manorville area. The water between the falls is fresh. The water between the Grangebel Park falls and the sewage treatment plant is brackish. The water after the sewage treatment plant is salt water. The brown tide or the phytoplankton is pushed seaward from the mouth of the river. The water above the falls originates in the Yaphank area. It flows through and around the Brookhaven National Lab.

The Brookhaven National Lab has been identified as a "Superfund" site because of pollution there. During the '40s and '50s, radioactive waste was disposed of on the property. At one point, the lab deliberately exposed vegetation with low levels of radioactive material to determine the impact.

The Peconic River is known as the

most radioactive river in the United States. When the brown tide was found above the falls, it was suspected that the latent releases from the Brookhaven National Lab were possibly the culprits. Credence was given to this theory when phytoplankton similar to the brown tide microorganism was found in pools of water contained within the damaged nuclear reactor at Three Mile Island. Since the original outbreaks, brown tide has been found in bays of water well removed from the Peconic System. Brown tide has been showing up in Rampas-ture, Bellport and Great South Bay. None of these bays are directly connected to the sewage plant or the Peconic tributary that runs through the Brookhaven property. Logically then, new outbreaks would preclude the first

Put politics aside

Why the delay?

Both the House of Representatives and the United States Senate have passed bills addressing the line item veto. Both were passed with veto proof majorities. The bills differ just slightly.

Traditionally, the conference committee is convened to iron out these differences. The unified version is then passed and sent to the President for signature or veto.

Clinton, as every other President, supports and has asked for line item veto power. President Ronald Reagan, in a dramatic plea during his term of office, pointed to the two-foot-high budget bill and pleaded with America for line item veto power. As he pointed out, under the current system it is take it or leave it. If he vetoed the entire bill, the country would be bankrupt, financially paralyzed.

The buck stops with the President. He should have the power to weed out the pork. He should have the ability to stop the wasteful spending that protects provincial interests, but squanders the

two suspects from absolute consideration.

We were brought up on the banks of the Peconic. Every summer, the water would turn murky between the Grangebel falls and the mouth of the bay. Local suspicions were that it was the duck farms that were doing it. Along the banks of the Peconic, tens of millions of ducks were raised each year. Their excrement was commonly washed into the creeks and filtered into the river and the bay. Decomposing duck waste was measured in feet, not inches.

During the hot, humid days, like we had last week, the stench was not only unbearable, it was sickening. As a boy, we remember hating to go past the duck farm where Kmart in Riverhead is now

located. You knew from a mile away that the farm was there.

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Hubbard Avenue was even worse, particularly as you turned into Huckle-buck Creek--you literally had to hold your breath. It was common to not only see the discharge from the ducks, but blood in the water from the slaughtering. As picturesque as duck farms were, the odor from them said that they were pollutants. Public pressure mounted, the health department established new standards and costly regulations that virtually drove most of the duck farms out of existence. This was during the '60s and '70s.

By the time the '80s rolled around, most duck farms had been closed down, moved to the Midwest. A few duck farms survived, and raised ducks upland. The ducks' natural discharge was ended and the brown tide began to appear.

The raising of the White Peking Duck started in the early 1900s. Prior to that, the Peconic River was one of the world's greatest natural breeding grounds for wild ducks. During the 1900s, the area between Red Creek and Manorville was the site of several sports-men's clubs that concentrated on duck hunting. These clubs, over the years, raised thousands of mallards, which were released. Corning programs were instrumental in attracting thousands of more ducks that were utilizing the fly-ways in their flights between the north and the south.

During this period, the skies would literally be black, the sun blacked out in late afternoon and early morning, as millions of grackles came to rest along the banks of the Peconic. The trees in downtown Riverhead were covered, every branch taken by these birds. The reeds and the bullrushes along the banks of the Peconic were literally covered with these birds. When the sun rose and the birds again went into the air, the skies were blackened. The birds spread out to return that evening. This pattern went on every spring and every fall until the birds left for warmer climates or to nest in the summer.

The main streets of Riverhead had to be washed every morning. The accumulation of bird droppings was not only rank, but made for slippery conditions. This effluence was washed into the gutters and ran off into the river. Nobody gave much thought to this in those days. Few give much thought to it today.

Is there a correlation between the ducks doing it, and the brown tide? Was there something in the bird droppings that created a balance that is needed in the river to control the development of these microorganisms?

Only two major things have happened since the '60s. We have eliminated the ducks. Because the food sources are no longer here, the grackles changed their pattern. We have stopped using DDT. DDT is an extremely harmful chemical that rightfully has been banned. It was not used prior to the '50s, and the bays were clean before that. So, even this should probably be eliminated as a source of contamination. This brings us back to the element of the ducks, the birds and the droppings.

We have always believed that when you fool with the delicate balance of Mother Nature, you cannot predict the outcome.

Our elimination of the ducks on the Peconic could turn out to be the cause of the brown tide. It's a theory worth studying. An answer must be found.

And why not?

Some say Republicans are having second thoughts; they don't want to give the President this kind of power. If this is true, this shortsighted stupidity will quickly end the Republicans' hold on Congress. The voters will not tolerate being betrayed again.

This is a new America, a new government. The voters got rid of the bad at the last election. If Congress and Senate do not accept this, we will do it again.

Line item veto now; no more procrastination.

And why not?

Some towns quickly reacted to the exaggerated news of the elephants' argument. Animal activists who disdain the idea of animals being held in captivity for any reason immediately demanded that the elephants be banned from performing here on Long Island. It looked like the circus would go on without the elephants. A baseball game without hot dogs and peanuts! The idea was not appealing and, fortunately, the town boards have discarded this idea.

The show will go on, and thousands of kids will have a memorable experience. The animals will be there. They will be treated well. The owners have a big investment in them and, if for no other reason, will care for and protect them.

And why not?

Baseball without hot dogs?

The elephants are back!

A circus is a highly complex extravaganza. Long Island is fortunate to be on the show tour of the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus group. The circus brings joy, happiness, a bit of nostalgia and pure, clean, family entertainment to our area each year.

The circus is a finely-tuned spectacular combining actors, animals, daredevils, animal trainers and handlers. For many, it is the only time in their life they are going to be exposed firsthand to elephants, lions and horses.

A few years back, I questioned the handling of the livestock. I was allowed backstage. The conditions that the animals were kept in were excellent. They were clean. The animals themselves were exceptionally well cared for. They were groomed. They were checked and

given attention and affection. The animals responded in kind.

Last month, two of the elephants that performed with the circus had a spat. One of the elephants was in heat and obviously was suffering from PMS. The elephants became unruly, and spectators were frightened, but the handlers did a superb job of controlling the animals and removing them from the performance area.

In the circus' long history, they have never experienced a fatality from animals. The management of the circus knows their job well and understands the nature and the dangers of their production. They are mindful of the investment that they have and will do everything that they can to uphold the standards they have become known for.

A conversation with Gov. Pataki

New York State Governor George Pataki stopped by Suffolk Life last week. He thanked us for our support in his bid to become governor. More importantly, he wanted to know, from a grassroots source, what the problems were facing Long Island, what were their governmental solutions and what he could do to bring about a resolution. He got an earful.

Managing Editor Lou Grasso and yours truly spent over an hour-and-a-half outlining the problem of survival on the Island, which at one time had been the economic engine of New York State.

We carefully gave Governor Pataki the history that has led to many Long Islanders being economically unable to continue to live here. We plainly painted the picture that it wasn't the people but it was the government that was the problem.

We outlined the need for the state take-over of the mandated education, the consolidation of administration, the hiring of teachers by the state and the contracting of these teachers to the local districts. We suggested that voters should be empowered to control the electives, the expensive items, proposed and selected by school boards. These are the items that have added 50% to 60% to the cost of a mandated, quality education.

We suggested that if the state could not take over their constitutional responsibilities, that the voters be empowered to choose, on a menu basis, all electives and extra-curricular activities over and above the state mandates. These items would only be offered once. Voters could pass or fail. They could not be brought up again until the next annual election.

The current system is unethical and

borders on corruption. Voters and taxpayers are disenfranchised. Their vote is rendered meaningless.

We discussed LILCO, the need to reintroduce criminal penalties against utility officials who lie and deliberately misstate facts. The value of a state takeover of all generating facilities. The equalization of the cost of electricity, the need to make all utilities compete by being productive rather than being guaranteed profits and a rate of return.

We agreed that the composite of the Public Service Commission needed to be changed. New commissioners needed to be appointed that would recognize their responsibility to the consumer. The PSC must open up the rate setting procedure to encourage competition. Wheeling charges must be set that are realistic and in line with the established rates of other utilities throughout the nation. We briefly touched on a public takeover of LILCO

and the need to explore all other options including having LIPA replicate the LILCO system of transmission and distribution.

Before the governor left our office, he had a clear-cut understanding of the frustrations and the depth of despair many Long Islanders are operating under.

The governor made few comments other than to demonstrate a desire to know and a willingness to explore new visions and possibilities. He did indicate that they are exploring a plan, which he did not go into detail on, that would result in a quick reduction of up to 20% of the cost of electricity.

Pataki must come up with well thought-out plans to solve our problems. He has to get government out of our way and off our backs. He knows it, and time will tell whether or not he will meet this challenge.

And why not?

We are all very darn proud

Last week, Suffolk Life had an opportunity to publish a good news story.

Boy Scout Troop 244 from Rocky Point had gone on a mid-summer canoe and camping trip in the Adirondacks. In the middle of the night, the area in which they were camping, one of the more remote parts of the Adirondacks, was unexpectedly hit by a severe thunder and lightning storm and a tornado.

The scout leaders and the scouts themselves acted magnificently. Using the lessons that they had learned in survival classes and through numerous merit badge projects, they found shel-

ter and safety. Upon securing their own safety, they immediately started a search and rescue mission. They knew that there were other campers in the area, including youngsters like themselves. In the dark of the night with the storm raging, they found the other victims and brought them to the safety of their encampment.

In the morning, the scouts immediately set out for help. They cut their way through fallen trees and paths closed over. They recovered their canoes and dodged their way downstream cutting their way through trees that were blocking passage and dodging

fallen, floating objects. They eventually found help. All were rescued. We are proud of these young men and their leaders.

Scouting is one of the family values that has fallen by the wayside. Some consider it kind of "nerdish" to take part in uniformed discipline, learning about oneself, one's capabilities and strengths. Some do not consider it "in" to have respect for your fellow men or your leadership. Scouting projects, meetings and exercises take time. The "boob tube" gets in the way, as does the lack of parental advisors.

Scout leaders are volunteers. They

coach their charges. There are numerous meetings that they must attend, affairs they must take part in. Precious nights and weekends are given up by the leaders. The scouting leaders receive very little recognition from the community and that is sad, for they are contributing tremendously to the well being, the upbringing and the discipline of the next generation.

Supreme Court Judge Tom Stark once commented to me over a hamburger at a local lunch counter that in all the time that he had been a judge, no person had ever come before him for sentencing that had been a scout. Doesn't that say something?

Recently, the Wall Street Journal devoted over a full page to the boot camp training of the United States Marine. They depicted the lives of several recruits who were wandering aimlessly in their youth and who had joined the Marines. They came in, a disorganized, shiftless lot with little self-respect and almost no respect for the society around them. They came out of the Marines with a purpose in life, a profound understanding of who they were and a renewed commitment to life. Most had no desire to go home and return to the upheaval of a wanderless society.

America is awash with aimlessness, a lack of respect for who we are or a capability of surviving. Our youth do not respect themselves or even understand who they are or what their role in society is. This tragedy leads to a contempt for all authority, whether it be parents, teachers, cops or employers. Many youths so dislike themselves that they have a hatred for even their own peers. They can't bond with their own sex and hold the opposite sex in disrespect.

Through the upheaval of society during the last 30 years, the scouting movement has not faltered. It teaches its members to be proud and respectful of themselves, their peers and have a true love for God and country. As our local Rocky Point scouts have proven, scouting does have meaning. It is as relevant today as it was when the first pack and troop was formed.

Thanks, guys, for a job well done. We are proud of you.

And why not?

Point of view

ABC 'berated' America

By Mark Vogl

ABC Television and Peter Jennings have removed any mask of neutrality and come out of the closet on the symbolic and emotional issue of the Smithsonian's failed attempt to rewrite history regarding Hiroshima. In 90 minutes on prime time, nationwide television, they came out swinging at America. Their cold, stoic presentation of facts, theories, suppositions, and pictures were clearly intended to berate America for their victory in the Pacific.

It is clear, unchallenged, propaganda power which leads one to seriously question whether the First Amendment is now being used to destroy the nation, the very people who revere its sanctity. Jennings closed his bombardment of America's conscience with a statement that certain politicians and veterans' groups pressured the Smithsonian into removing aspects of the display which would force people to question America's use of the Atomic bomb. He lambasted those groups saying, "Didn't we fight to preserve the right of freedom of speech?"

No Pete, we fought because a vicious, militaristic, expansionist nation attacked us while we were at church!

Jennings, using authors and historians as window dressing, questioned whether America would have lost one million Americans invading Japan. He inferred that we were more likely to have lost 250,000 Americans killed, and half a million wounded. Well hell, that ain't so bad! Gee,

you mean we would have only had a quarter of a million American dead? Well that puts a whole new light on it. That's only five Vietnams...no problem.

Jennings also repeatedly explored the idea of the Soviets becoming full-fledged partners in the Pacific War. He offered the idea of an expanded Soviet role in the Pacific as an option preferable to dropping the bomb. He went on to infer that we used atomic weapons to demonstrate our military prowess to the Soviets. However, he offered these theories without answering whether they were, in fact, U.S. policy, and more importantly whether they worked to ensure a more peaceful world.

Jennings never took the time to remind viewers of the fate of eastern Europe under our Soviet allies. He never posed the question: if the Soviets became militarily active in the Pacific, would they have occupied Asian nations like they did in Europe? He never considered the effect of the Hiroshima images on Krushchev's mind as he played nuclear chess with John Kennedy around Cuba.

No, there was a clearly designed message behind the ABC broadcast. The questions and facts which would have provided the strategic, diplomatic, and emotional rationale for the use of the bomb were downplayed, or ignored. At no time did he translate 250,000 dead Americans into your grandfather. While he did mention, in a matter of fact way, that 80% of the American public supported the use of the Atomic bomb at the time, he refused to take the time needed to fully explain the pain and

suffering brought to this nation by a war we did not start, and made every effort to avoid.

The ABC broadcast symbolizes the contempt the liberal media feels for the average American, and for a generation which suffered depression and world war. It shows a unity of elitist intellectuals who found America's rebuke of the Smithsonian a slap in the face. This was get even time!

Generations of Americans, more than 20 million veterans over four decades, and 12 trillion American tax dollars were committed to win the Cold War and deter global nuclear holocaust. If the networks have 90 minutes of spare time, why don't they spend it recognizing our historic achievements instead of bashing America every chance they get?

The First Amendment doesn't protect prayer in school, yet it is supposed to protect the media and taxpayer funded museums when they try to rewrite history to meet their elitist liberal agenda. The news is no longer a source of objective information. Instead, it has become a propaganda machine used to destroy American history and values.

I can only hope that Jennings' traveling liberal circus is the last straw. Are American investors smart enough to see the need for a conservative-oriented national television network? And before that, is this blatant use of the media by liberals to react to American public opinion, enough to drive television viewers away from the traditional national and local networks? Advertisers, wake up!

Why not use Mother Nature?

Mother Nature, left to her own devices or aided by man, can do marvelous things. With the recurrence of the brown tide, a couple of conversations from the past have come back to mind.

There was a gentleman in Riverhead, Doctor George A. Goode, a local veterinarian and an avid observer of everything wild and wonderful.

We were riding down Riverside Drive one day, and Doc got talking about the Riverhead Sewage Plant and the effluents being pumped into the Peconic River. He said, "You know, it is a damn shame they are pumping that nitrogen-laden effluent into the pristine bay. Look over there, on the south side of the river, across from the Indian Is-

land Golf Course, there is a huge meadow that is part of the wetlands." Doc said, "Why not put a berm around the edge of the wetlands, pump the effluent into this area? The nitrogens will feed the grasses, encouraging more growth. The treated water will naturally percolate down to the muck and the sand further purifying itself before being released into the river."

Many times he brought up the same idea, not only to me but to all who would listen. Unfortunately, no one acted upon this wisdom. Maybe it is time that those who have the knowledge and the resources consider the wisdom of this common sense from a man who spent his lifetime studying the causes and effects of Mother Na-

ture.

The second conversation I had was with the late Rudy Cammeron, who was at that time the head of the Suffolk County Public Works. Rudy, like Doc, was a common sense type of guy. He preferred to work with nature rather than against it.

The conversation started with our agreement on how important wetlands are to the balance of nature—how they contribute so greatly to the food chain and the important part that they play in controlling erosion and providing a habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Wetlands were being assaulted at record levels as people sought to build homes as close to the water as they

physically could get. We discussed the creation of new wetlands. Throughout the bays there are sandbars that are created by the ebb and flow of tides and currents. During this process, many of our creeks and waterways become filled with shifting sands and sludge. Inland, we develop incredible amounts of old concrete and rock that must be disposed of. Why not use this material to build berms on the edges of the sandbars? Fill these berms with the sludge and sand that is developed when canals and channels must be dredged. Plant these newly-created wetlands with native grasses and plants.

This could be funded by requiring that those building on or near wetlands create five acres of wetlands for every acre that they disturb. Boy, didn't this all make sense?

Unfortunately, Rudy met his maker before he could sell this concept. As the years have gone by, we have watched hundreds of acres of wetlands in tidal areas disappear without the creation of any new ones.

We have seen tons of construction and demolition material taken off Long Island to be disposed of out-of-state. Many of our creeks and channels are now impassable for boats, as there are no places left to put the spoil which impedes dredging projects.

The need is more apparent than ever before for new ideas or old, recycled ones. For Rudy's sake, let's give his idea some serious thought.

And why not?

Could be a home run

Bob Mrazek, former United States congressman, has approached Suffolk County government with a concept for private entrepreneurs to build a stadium for a baseball team on Suffolk County Community College property in Brentwood.

Mrazek's investors would build this stadium on county land. In return for use of this land, they would allow the Suffolk County Community College to utilize the stadium for their sport teams and other endeavors. They are asking for the county to build the roads and parking lots and other infrastructure improvements.

The county should seize this oppor-

tunity and negotiate for the parking fees that could go into a dedicated fund to repay the bonds that will have to be issued for this estimated \$12 million expenditure.

Mrazek's proposal, on the surface, appears to be reasonable. His investors would be putting up their money for the creation of the stadium. They would be at risk rather than the taxpayers of Suffolk County. The investors would enjoy the profits if the venture is successful. That is fair.

The county would have another facility to enhance its tourism base. The county would also benefit from the sales tax revenues both from the stadium and

monies that would be spent within the communities on lodging, meals, gasoline, etc.

The Suffolk County Community College would have an athletic complex created for them that they could utilize in teaching and for sport and entertainment activities. If there would be sufficient parking to create the revenues to pay off the bonds over their useful life, the whole proposition is a win-win situation.

This is the first proposal for a sports complex that the citizens of Suffolk County could win from rather than contribute to. That's good politics. That's good government.

And why not?

The Waco inferno: nothing changed

Congress has just completed hearings on the burning of Waco. Nothing much has changed. The United States government, with total disregard for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, burned to death 80 men, women and children, citizens of the United States protected by the Constitution. We killed our own out of arrogance and stupidity and with an indifference to life.

David Koresh, the leader of the Waco people, could have been peacefully apprehended weeks before the government tried to serve search warrants. Koresh frequently moved around Waco, patronizing stores and establishments. Why didn't they apprehend him? Why did they insist upon a violent confrontation?

Once the siege of Waco was undertaken, the government could have outwaited Koresh and his followers. The government knew that the methods they deployed would most assuredly lead to the annihilation of the men, women and children in the compound.

United States Attorney General Janet Reno acknowledged that she did not have all the information she should have had, but she accepted the responsibility for pulling the trigger, giving the orders to go ahead with the ill-fated, death causing action.

The Waco inferno was not only caused by ineptness but a disregard for

the value of life. These people may have been different. They may have believed in a different God. Their morals and ethics may have been repulsive to some of us, but they were living, breathing, United States citizens, protected by a piece of paper that thousands of men and women have died to uphold.

If circumstances had been changed and the cult was of color, holed up in Harlem, and the same scenario came

down, this country would be taken to task by nations around the world. There would have been unprecedented rioting in the streets from LA to Portland. We would have been condemned for violating human rights. We would be castigated for allowing our government to violate the very Constitution that is the foundation of our society.

All those who were involved individually in the Waco fiasco should be brought to trial for violating the human

and Constitutional rights of those they burned to death. The death of these people was not an accident. The degree of the crime is the only thing in question.

For our government to be strong and respected, it cannot tolerate such actions or stupid decisions by those empowered to uphold the principles of our Constitution. We must demand such happenings never occur again.

And why not?

Police do not protect

Contrary to popular opinion, it is not the police department's responsibility to protect the citizens. The obligation of the police force is to uphold the law, primarily to capture perpetrators and bring them before the justice system. It is up to the citizens to protect themselves. It is up to them to secure their homes to keep perpetrators out and to be able to defend themselves if approached by a perpetrator.

Last week, an incident happened in Southold that is shocking. A farmstand owner's property had been broken into on numerous occasions. The police were notified. Without the ability to post a guard or provide adequate surveillance, the perpetrators were not apprehended.

In frustration, the farmer conducted

a stake-out himself. He saw a car stop, a juvenile get out and the car drive off. Armed with a shotgun, the farmer caught the juvenile rifling the cash box. He apprehended him and tied him up.

Subsequently, the car that had dropped the juvenile off returned. The car slowed down, expecting to pick up the thief. Instead, the car was met by the farmer, who ordered the car to stop. The car sped up and attempted to get away. The farmer fired a shot, hitting the fender and blowing out the tire. He apprehended these perpetrators, too.

The police were called. Instead of the farmer being treated like a hero, he was arrested for reckless endangerment in the first degree. This is just plain sick. Citizens have rights, too, and an inalienable right to protect their life and property.

We are sick and tired of dirt bags, misfits in society, who feel that they are above the law and can do and take anything that they want. We have coddled disfunctional youth too long. We have made thieves, drug dealers and murderers into heroes.

If it is not the police's responsibility to protect us, it's time that our laws were changed to give us the absolute right to stop those who will harm us. Every law-abiding citizen has a stake in this case. They should be demanding that the district attorney refuse to press charges or try the case. The case must be thrown out and the farmer given a hero's parade down the Main Street of Southold.

It's time for people's justice, because current laws do not protect us.

And why not?