

Thank you, Editor Grasso

It is with deep sadness that I announce that Suffolk Life's managing editor of 16 years, Lou Grasso, is retiring.

Lou is one of the best wordsmiths that I know. More than being skilled at his trade, he has an innate ability to sense a story and present it in a humanistic fashion, easy to understand and easy to relate to.

Sixteen years ago, when Lou came to Suffolk Life, we were only a fragment of a newspaper. Lou asked me what I wanted. I told him I wanted to publish the best community newspaper that he could develop. I wanted the news to be honest, fair, accurate and balanced. Lou was to run his news department independently. I would give guidance, but I would not direct the news. The editorial page was to be mine. If he or one of his reporters had an opinion on a story, they were welcome to express their viewpoint on this page. Today, thanks to Lou, Suffolk Life is a well respected newspaper read by 89.5% of the people who receive it.

Over the 16 years we worked together we rarely had a disagreement. We jointly worked on many of the editorials. Both of us learned to write in the other's style.

Lou has been devoted to Suffolk County. He loves the people. Out of this love came a compulsion to publish as much meaningful news he could find space for, to take the lead and speak out with a forceful voice on the residents' behalf.

Lou has many accomplishments to his credit ranging from critically important issues such as Shoreham, to personal fundraising drives for those down on their luck who had a need to reach out to the community.

Lou is one of the co-founders of "The Group," and for as long as this organization has been in existence, has helped raise funds, qualify recipients, shop, wrap and deliver. He often took a special interest in an individual family and did everything by himself, out of his own funds. He remembered the roots he came from and how one person had made a difference his life.

Lou is an exceptionally good teacher. He relished the idea of taking a bright, young person and teaching them how to be an old-school journalist. He taught them how to investigate, interview and write. Many of his

charges have gone on to important positions in the news business.

Lou's job required hours on the telephone, hours that he spent patiently listening to people and questioning. Most nights, he took home an overstuffed briefcase with mail and news releases.

Being managing editor of Suffolk Life has not been an easy job but a job that he loved. Lou knew that the written word is important. He knew that reaching over one million readers each week carried with it a tremendous amount of responsibility. Publishing 35 local newspapers is no easy task for an individual or the limited staff he had to work with. Yet, each week, he would turn out interesting papers, covering and affecting the lives of Suffolk County residents.

Lou was not always loved by people he reported on but almost to a man, he was respected for his honesty, his integrity and his humanistic qualities.

On a happy note, Lou's successor is one of his bright proteges, Joey McClellan. Lou spent a lot of hours training Joey as a cub reporter. He instilled in him his values, and Lou's legacy should continue through Joey.

Personally, I wish Lou well for a job well done. We not only developed a wonderful working relationship built upon mutual trust and respect, but we built a close, personal relationship that I hope will continue.

When Lou came to me and announced his retirement he said, "I have been teaching for 16 years and I have never had a summer off. It's time." I had to agree with him.

Every resident in Suffolk County, whether they realize it or not, owes Lou a deep appreciation, for Lou Grasso was the eyes and the ears of the community, and the conscience to boot. He had the courage to speak out and seek change even if it meant taking on the establishment.

We hope in the days to come Lou will rest, relax, and when his energies are rebuilt, he will remember that he still has a home where he is loved, respected and honored, and that he will contribute an occasional piece for the people of Suffolk County.

Lou, we love you. We are going to miss you terribly.

And why not?

Liberals and Conservatives have agreed that the system had come to an end. The Welfare Reform Bill has passed the Senate and Congress, and President Clinton has indicated he will sign off on it. It's about time we got realistic with our entitlement programs.

Our only fear is that the bill lacks a transition mechanism that will take people smoothly from welfare to being able to stand on their own two feet.

Several weeks ago, we had suggested a reverse income tax for low-income workers. Instead of taxing the first dollar made, the federal government could subsidize the first few dollars of income with monies that could be used to purchase the necessary benefits such as medical, day care or job training—a work, learn and earn your way to freedom program. The reverse benefits would decrease as a worker earned more money and would cease somewhere around \$6.50 or \$7 per hour. This would encourage people to work hard for success, to go on the books rather than avoid taxes and responsibility by working in the underground economy. This is a program that we believe both Liberals and Conservatives could agree upon.

Let's give it some thought.

And why not?

Some final thoughts...

By Lou Grasso

I have been blessed for the last 16 years to have been part of the Suffolk Life Newspapers family of dedicated staff members. Together we have seen both good and not so good times, and have nurtured together the growth of this publication into a meaningful force in Suffolk County. This edition marks the end of my role as managing editor. It's time to smell the flowers.

Through the last 16 years we have been proud of the support this publication has received from its family of readers. We have been part of many battles together, we've won some and lost others. But for the most part, our readers and this publication have been part of a tremendous experience. Without the support of our readers, a dedicated publisher and a wonderful staff, we would not have enjoyed the successes we have had.

Dave Willmott, our publisher, has enabled our news staff to work free of political pressure. Together we have established the credo that our coverage must be fair, accurate and balanced, and we have tried our best to meet that goal. I have been privileged to work with some of the most dedicated journalists in the business, many of whom started in an entry level position and went on to bigger and better things. I will never forget them or the other dedicated members of our staff who labor long and hard to meet multiple deadlines and a heavy workload.

Leaving Suffolk Life is difficult. I have had the privilege of meeting and working with many wonderful folks. There are so many memories of battles fought, victories won, and problems left unsolved. But I leave you in good hands.

God bless.

Give us a vote

In the early '70s, Suffolk Life came out in favor of Peconic County. We still support the concept.

The East End of Long Island is a world apart from the West End. It was then and it is now. Our economy is different as is our environment. We expect more from our government.

The economics of Peconic County make sense. Since the '70s, Peconic has been trying to break off from Suffolk. At one point, we held a referendum on the question, but we were shot down by the state government which claimed we only had 90,000 population while 109,000 was required. The population of the East End has since grown. We now meet the population requirement.

Three years ago, a new movement for Peconic County came alive. Former Supervisor of Southampton Fred Thiele organized a committee to push the idea, which led to a financial feasibility study of the proposed new county. The study addressed the type of government anticipated, the services to be offered and projected that the taxes for Peconic County would be half of what we currently spend as Suffolk County residents.

Senator Ken LaValle was successful in getting a bill approved which calls for a referendum to be held on the issue. Assemblyman Thiele failed to get it through the Assembly. Democrat Assembly Leader Sheldon Silver stopped the Peconic County bill from passing. Silver feared that if the residents of the East End were given an opportunity to vote on this issue, it might make it easier for Staten Island to break apart from New York City and thus weaken the Democratic stranglehold on the city.

Thiele has now requested each of the five East End towns offer the voters an opportunity to vote this coming November on the issue. The referendum would state: "a local law requiring the State Legislature

approve legislation permitting a binding referendum on the creation of Peconic County in the towns of East Hampton, Riverhead, Shelter Island, Southampton and Southold, and requiring a four-fifths vote of the town board in approving any action related to the creation of Peconic County be approved."

The idea of a referendum or local law is appealing. It gives the voters the opportunity of saying "yes" or "no" on this issue. If the vote is yes, let's go ahead full speed. If the result is no, let's put the matter to bed and go on to other things. Since towns are not permitted to put advisory referendums on the ballot, the "super majority" proposal, for which a referendum is required by law, is a means by which the public can have an opportunity to speak out on the issue.

Riverhead Town Board members are questioning the issue. The Riverhead Town Board has a habit of studying things to death and avoiding taking a stand. Their procrastination in this case could set back the Peconic County movement by years.

Supervisor James Stark and the council members should get off the fence and give the public the right to choose. This is not a binding referendum. It will only demonstrate the will and the intent of the public. The referendum will only be an indication that the people of Eastern Long Island do or do not want a Peconic County. There is nothing to be lost by asking people what they want. If you believe in democracy, you must believe in the public's right to choose.

We encourage residents living in the five East End towns to contact their town halls, particularly the residents of Riverhead, and tell them that they are in support of putting the question of Peconic County on the ballot this November. This must be done by August 15 so the notice can be posted in time to get it on the ballot.

And why not?

Protect thyself

New York State has finally joined the rest of the nation in allowing people to purchase Mace legally.

Mace is a spray that people can carry on their person. When activated, it gives individuals an opportunity of warding off a perpetrator. Mace is a chemical spray that temporarily affects the eyes and the skin. It gives victims an opportunity to fight back and to flee a dangerous situation.

Women and older folks should arm themselves accordingly for they are the

most frequent victims of rapes, muggings and robberies. A word of caution to those who decide to arm themselves with Mace; you should be schooled in its appropriate use. Read the instructions carefully. Buy a can and practice on an innate object. Keep a can on your person and in an easily accessible location.

We have a right to protect ourselves. We should take advantage of this opportunity.

And why not?

End of the welfare system!

Welfare has been one of the most controversial programs that came into existence in the United States. Few citizens disagree that the government does not have a responsibility to help, temporarily, those in need. Few citizens can stomach seeing able-bodied men and women refusing to work and living indefinitely off the system.

Since F.D.R.'s New Deal, the United States has had a welfare system that had unprecedented growth. Instead of being a helping hand, it became an occupation, a way of life. Productive citizens were encouraged to stifle their abilities and to participate in the system. Young women were encouraged to have children out of wedlock, without care or worry about how their children would be fed, clothed, housed, educated or medicated.

Many of our workers who are putting in 60 to 80 hours per week can barely keep up with those who did not work on either the necessities or the luxuries. These workers are reminded of their generosity, the tax burden that is placed on them whenever they go to a supermarket and see people using food stamps to buy items they cannot afford and then get into a car that is in better shape than theirs.

Will 5.5% reduction kill LILCO?

The New York State Public Service Commission is expected to cut LILCO's electrical rates by 5.5%. Some say this action is part of the plan to force LILCO to bargain with LIPA over the takeover. We believe this rate reduction is a response to the public's outrage over paying the highest electrical rates in the continental United States.

For the last 40 years, the Public Service Commission has been in the hip pocket of the utility and Wall Street. Governor George Pataki appointed his own man as head of the PSC. Pataki has started to realign the board. Pataki was made well aware of Long Island's concern and anger at paying LILCO's exorbitant rates. During his campaign for governor, Pataki promised to bring about rate relief. We believe he is living up to that campaign pledge.

LILCO and many of the utilities in New York State and their financial backers on Wall Street have long operated under the theory that they can charge whatever the traffic can bear. They believe the ratepayers are a golden goose that they are allowed to pluck as they are a quasi-monopoly. Unfortunately they didn't know the threshold of Long Island residents.

The Public Service Commission is charged with a dual responsibility, keep rates reasonable and keep the utility healthy. The PSC has been insulated from the public while being wined and dined by the Wall Street community. Wall Street having undue influence over the PSC has been able to go to the investors and give them a guarantee of a return on their investment.

During the Shoreham hearings, we heard testimony from a Wall Street utility guru who stated that utility financing carries with it a tacit guarantee of not only a return on the investment but a return on the principal. This is what they have told their investors. This in the real world should be hogwash.

Utilities are like any other capitalistic business and in capitalism there is no guarantee of either return of principal or interest. When you invest wisely, you

make a profit. If the business goes bad, you not only do not receive interest or dividends but you stand the risk of losing your investment.

Over the last 10 years, LILCO could have done many things to improve their financial position. Instead of using profits for dividends they could have paid down their debt and eliminated interest.

During the first three years of the Shoreham agreement, they received huge rate increases. This windfall should have been used to pay off the debt. Instead, the Board of Directors at LILCO restored, and then increased dividends. The market responded. The value of LILCO's shares increased. The windfall profits were intended to reduce the debt, not increase the value of LILCO's stockholders. The stockholders had been part and parcel of the Shoreham debacle.

Utility competition, at long last, is on the horizon. LILCO, whether there is a takeover or through competition, is going to be forced to reduce the cost of electricity.

LILCO currently charges twice the nation's average for electricity. Given an opportunity to buy cheaper electricity through deregulation, LILCO's customers will flee the company's grip in wholesale numbers.

A 5.5% reduction may send shudders through Wall Street but it still leaves a 45% reduction before LILCO can become competitive.

The PSC should consider mandating that all dividends be frozen and the profits that would go into dividends be used to pay off LILCO's debt. This is exactly what any of us would do if we had LILCO's problem. We would take whatever excess monies we had and pay off our debts before we put money in a savings account or used it to buy luxuries.

As long as LILCO is allowed to carry the millions of dollars of debt it has on the books and pass along the cost of carrying this debt to the ratepayers, rates never can reach the nations average. The answer is simple, does the PSC have the courage?

And why not?

It's not the man

Republicans are holding their nominating convention to pick their standard bearer. It is expected to be Senator Bob Dole from Kansas. In a few weeks, the Democrats are expected to nominate President Bill Clinton for reelection.

It doesn't make an awful lot of difference who the standard bearer is, it is what he believes in, his position on the issues; more important, it is the staff that he should surround himself with.

The President is more a figurehead than he is a decision maker. The country is too big for one man to have a grasp on all the circumstances or all the issues. It is his Cabinet officers, his department heads and their staffs who will grind out the facts, figures, reach the conclusions and give him the high points to make pronouncements.

In choosing the President, we are choosing the philosophy. The philosophies come together when it is important to politics. When politics are put aside, it is the true beliefs of the President and his staff that matter. This is the essence of the Presidency. The image that the President portrays is important for the President is the figurehead, the "father" of the

country.

What are their values? What is their understanding of the economy, the environment and the business and social issues that confront the people on a daily basis? Do they believe that government can solve all problems or an individual is better left to his own devices? Does business work on the principle of supply and demand or government regulation? Should the American people be forced into socialized programs or would they be better served by being able to choose? Should the citizens be taxed more and have more benefits come down from Washington? Should they be taxed less and be expected to do more for themselves?

There are so many issues that we all should consider when voting for our President. We hope that both candidates will concentrate on many of these issues and not allow their campaigns to slip and slide in political mud.

By November we pray we, as American citizens, will be able to distinguish the difference between the standard bearers of both parties and then make the right choice for the right reason.

And why not?

One country, one language

Our country, our county is a melting pot. Immigrants have come here since the beginning of the new world. Even the Indian tribes who now are considered Native Americans were immigrants from the East. In Michener's book, "Alaska," he outlines how tribes migrated from Asia over the ice cap through Alaska and into the lower 48.

Right after the war we remember the influx of Polish immigrants. On a regular basis, new faces appeared in our schools, kids who could not speak a word of English. Within a very short span of time, they were speaking English as well as other citizens. Their parents realized that to survive and to succeed they had to assimilate. To assimilate, they needed to speak the country's "native" tongue.

Currently, Suffolk County is experiencing a wave of immigrants from Hispanic and Asiatic countries. Most of these immigrants, like those who came before them, want to suc-

ceed, but to succeed, they must reach a common ground. This common ground is language--the English language.

Suffolk County currently is considering an English Only Language Bill. The original provisions of the bill were harsh and dictatorial. The new bill is more conciliatory. It still requires English as the official language but allows exceptions that would serve the needs of those who have not learned the language and would give them encouragement to do so.

The legislature is expected to vote on this at the next meeting. What they will be voting on is putting a proposition on the ballot to be decided upon by us. We will have the ultimate say. There will be ample time for debate and each of us can vote as we see fit. This is the best way to handle this controversial idea. Let the public speak.

And why not?

Southold's Problems, Riverhead's Opportunity

Utilizing a high-speed ferry between Orient Point and New London, Connecticut, is the fastest way to cross the Long Island Sound. The ferry actually makes the crossing in less than 45 minutes. Unfortunately, getting from Riverhead (the end of the Long Island Expressway) to Orient Point, takes over an hour on a good day and up to two hours when there is traffic.

The attraction on the Connecticut side is Foxwood, the gambling casino. A new casino is being built and will open this fall. It is expected to draw thousands more people.

The roads between Riverhead and Orient are rural. Sound Avenue is a two-lane highway, except for a small stretch between Mattituck and Southold, where it is four lanes. The main road, Route 25, winds through all the small hamlets and villages. It, too, is a two-lane road, not meant to carry more than local traffic.

Southold residents are up in arms. They are tired of the traffic which is severe once you get passed the Village of Greenport. East Marion and Orient residents have petitioned the town board for relief. But outside of stalling tactics, there is little that Southold Town officials can do as the ferry is governed by the Interstate Commerce Commission and federal rule supercedes local municipal rule.

Southold Town officials should turn to their neighbor, Riverhead, for help. Riverhead, like Southold, fronts on the Sound, and it is at the end of the Long Island Expressway.

On the Sound, in Riverhead, is the Northville terminus that was used by huge tankers that formerly brought fuel and gasoline to Long Island. Since the oil crisis abated, they have been all but closed down. It would make an ideal site for a ferry terminus.

It would save substantial time getting from Riverhead to Orient by road. It would increase traffic into Riverhead, which would play into Riverhead Town's desire to grow.

The site is not being used as originally intended. It could be rebuilt for parking and ferry operations. The Sound's deep water provides more than adequate draft for the ferries. Time traveled by the ferries in the sound would be far quicker than over the roads. As many of the improvements to the site for docking ships have already been made, the upfront cost might be considerably less. Both Riverhead and Southold Town officials should seriously discuss this proposal.

If talks fail with Riverhead, Southold Town officials should explore with LIPA, and LILCO, the possibility of using the former Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant as a ferry terminus. This site was proposed before but LILCO turned a deaf ear to the proposition.

They were fat, happy and had the PSC in their back pocket. The pressure is now on LILCO to become lean and mean and reduce rates by reducing costs or generate resource from non-electrical profit opportunities.

Contrary to public opinion and knowledge, LILCO still owns most of the 450-acre Shoreham site. LIPA only owns the acreage that the plant and the fuel storage were located on. If a deal could be struck that would give LILCO needed, non-utility revenues and serve the public at the same time, it should be considered.

The residents of Southold Town cannot absorb all the traffic they are currently handling and be expected to accommodate more. Their problem should be an opportunity to the towns to their west.

And why not?

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We must have accountability

We are accountable as parents, and we hold our children accountable. Our employers hold us accountable. As business owners we are accountable to our stockholders. If we own the business ourselves, we are accountable for the profits that the business makes that allows it to grow and prosper.

As employees, if we do not perform, do not live up to the standards that are expected of us, we can be terminated. If the CEO does not develop the profits, the stockholders will replace him. If a child disobeys his or her parents and does not achieve or live up to the standards set by the parents, the parents impose their will on the child.

Many of us believe that if we do not lead our lives according to God's standards, we will be held accountable. Why is it then, that one segment of our society is not held accountable, the teachers of our young people?

After three years on the job, a teacher receives a lifetime contract because of tenure. They are not held accountable to the students, the parents or the administration. As long as they show up and go through the motions, they are guaranteed job security, automatic raises and a secure way of life.

This coming fall, our state legislators will be seeking office. The concept of renewable tenure has been discussed frequently. Renewable tenure would replace the current system of guaranteed tenure. Under proposals being made, teachers would have individual contracts that would be subject to review every three to five years.

The teachers' productivity, work ethics and attitude would be examined. How well

did they educate their charges? How many kids achieved? What extra effort did they put forth to motivate the students? What are their work habits? How often did they miss class or come unprepared? How many days were they late or a substitute had to be called in? Did they have control over the classroom? Did they improve their people skills? What was the opinion of the parents, the students as well as their supervisors?

If they do their job, their tenure is renewed. If they fall short, their license can be revoked or they could be terminated from their jobs.

Our children are our most precious asset. We give the system their bodies and their minds. We are paying the price, should we not expect the best for our kids? Aren't the educational rights of the children more important than the employment rights of their teachers?

The legislative candidates will be debating this issue. Who are these candidates beholden to, the powerful teachers union or the citizens of their district? The state legislature has the power to introduce renewable tenure. They can make renewable tenure a provision of the licensing law.

A court recently ruled that renewable tenure can be a negotiated item, if the school boards and the teachers unions agree. Although renewable tenure is probably the most important principle that should be in a contract, few school boards have the courage or the will to go to the mat on this issue.

Our hopes lie with the state legislature and we all should find out where the candidates stand.

And why not?

Will the '80s ever return?

As I watched segments of the Republican National Convention and listened to the proposals being put forth, I thought to myself, is it possible that we can return to the '80s?

How well I remember on Friday nights, men and women coming down to the marina with a case of beer under their arm, a few bucks in their pockets and a smile on their faces. The marina was jammed in those days. Slips were hard to come by. Everybody was enjoying prosperity and the good times rolled.

Recently, on a balmy Friday night, the stark contrast hit me. There were few people around and even less smiles. Probably 30% or 40% of the slips in the marina were empty, and the marina, a family-owned business, has been put up for sale.

During the Reagan years, almost every boat sailed. Now, on weekends, only a few boats leave their slips. We have been told over the last several years that the '80s were a fool's paradise. That the economy was not real and our expectations had grown too large.

There is no question that Reagan's tax cut created the economy that brought the good times. Businesses boomed and the governments' coffers overflowed with tax money. Unfortunately, Congress spent this newfound wealth faster than they were taking it in. Our debt increased incredibly. There was little Reagan could do about it.

Bob Dole and Jack Kemp have proposed a 15% across-the-board, tax cut. A 50% reduction in the capital gains tax and a \$500 per child tax cut. They also intend to bring the budget into balance by the target date of 2002.

The Republican convention was filled with optimism and hope. The Republican

tent was opened to include all who have a sense of individual self-worth and a belief that we, as Americans, can do for ourselves what our government cannot.

The convention was upbeat. The delegates were unified. It was agreed that there could be disagreements, but no one would be disagreeable if they had a difference of opinion.

Elizabeth Dole did an incredible job of uplifting our spirits and being supportive of her husband. She portrayed a very humanistic picture of the man who wants to lead this country.

Dole's acceptance speech was filled with the right mix of intelligence, humor, and fire and brimstone. It was probably the best speech he has ever delivered.

Prior to last spring, I knew Dole only through the press and the media. I fortunately had some time with him in a one-to-one meeting. In person, he came across as brilliant, warm, understanding, and a man of principle. During our discussion, I disagreed with him and found he wanted to know my logic. I uttered my concern for his age and he forcefully stated that he still arose at 4:30 a.m. every morning, spent an hour exercising while he listened to an update on the news. His doctors assured him that he was in excellent health and his mind was still as sharp as a tack having been broadened with knowledge through experience.

When I met Bob Dole, I had great reservations. When I left our meeting, I had great admiration.

If the Republican convention did nothing else, it gave the American people a lift in spirits, a hope for the future and a reason to be optimistic. Our country can grow again. Our work can be rewarded.

An anticlimactic verdict

The McNamara episode has finally come to an end--an anti-climactic end.

McNamara, who was accused of stealing billions of dollars from GMAC and who made the allegation that he bribed everybody in Brookhaven Town, was finally sentenced to five years in jail. Many were shocked by the sentence.

McNamara cut a deal with the federal prosecutors. He turned state's evidence, wore a wire and tried to trap various Brookhaven officials. He had claimed when originally indicted that he had bribed the high and the powerful as well as the lowly clerks. The federal government put their best case forward and came up virtually empty. Outside of some plea bargains, they got little for their money.

McNamara will probably be out of jail in a year-and-a-half to two. Although a good part of his vast empire has been seized, he is reported to still be worth a sizable fortune.

GMAC is suing him, civilly, and this fortune that he still holds may end up being theirs.

Brookhaven Town officials have been vindicated. McNamara's co-conspirators within GMAC have never been publicly announced. It would be naive to think that McNamara pulled off this scam independently without help from the inside. We wonder why the feds did not go after these people?

McNamara was Horatio Alger. He built a vast empire from little. He was respected in his community and admired by many. The tragedy of his fall caused tremendous heartache, for he had touched many lives.

There still are so many unanswered questions of why he did it and how he could get away with it. While McNamara serves his time in jail, he should consider writing a book. It would make fascinating reading and might give some clues.

And why not?

Compensation should be tied to performance

In the Town of Riverhead, controversy is swirling around the pending renewal of the superintendent of schools' contract. Superintendent Robert Holmes has been negotiating for a four-year contract that would bring him from \$115,000 to \$148,000 in four years, plus perks and fringes that will bring the contract's value close to \$200,000.

Riverhead is not a wealthy community. Few people who work within the town make even half of this. The average resident makes less than 20%. The president of the Suffolk County National Bank, which has branches throughout Suffolk County, makes about \$250,000. The supervisor of the Town of Riverhead makes less than 50% of the superintendent's salary. The county executive makes just over \$100,000 and the governor of the entire State of New York makes \$135,000.

Many residents, both with kids in school and those without, are asking why we are considering paying any superintendent this much money. Why give him a four-year contract when experience has told us that superintendents can go bad and to get rid of them you have to buy out their contract. Why put the taxpayers in this position? Why not offer a more modest salary, and if we have funds available, give bonuses for achievement?

Accountability and measurable productivity in a school system? No, we are not kidding. If the bank president does not produce the expected profits, he will find himself without a job. He will not see bonuses and he would not dare to ask for an increase. If

the elected officials don't do the job voters want done at a cost that the public will tolerate, they are thrown out of office. Why should school superintendents be subject to any less a degree of accountability?

Has the school board, as trustees of the people, considered standards of accountability for the superintendent? Standards based upon the students' achievements and keeping the cost to the taxpayers down. Why not pay a modest base salary and big bonuses for the number of kids that graduate with an acceptable level of basic skills? Why not pay a big bonus for reducing the schools' expenditures? Give him a free hand to cut out the fat, the duplication and the waste. If he is able to trim the expenditures,

he shares in the saving. Put the contract out on a year-to-year basis. Give him one year to produce or vamoose.

Running a school is a big job. Certainly not the biggest. Certainly not the most dangerous. There are many people with management skills and educational expertise that could do the job. Many would love to have the chance to make a more than reasonable salary.

Instead of signing a blind contract, the board should be looking for options. Riverhead is no different than any one of the other school districts. The establishment never considers enough, enough. They do not want to be held accountable.

It's time that the citizens demanded accountability and reasonableness in education. If it isn't already too late, Riverhead is a good place to start.

And why not?

Many residents... are asking why we are considering paying any superintendent this much money?

Suffolk County caves in

New York State was given a deadline of July 1 for the New York State Troopers to take over the patrol of the Long Island Expressway. The deadline was extended to October 6, 1996 last spring.

County Executive Robert Gaffney said at the time the state budget was still in formulation and that the state needed time to include the funding for the takeover.

The Long Island Expressway is part of the interstate system. Throughout New York State, the interstate system is patrolled by New York State Police. In the County of Westchester, New York State reimburses that county for patrolling the state roads within its jurisdiction. The last time we checked, Long Island was still part of New York State.

Just like any other county, we pay New York State taxes to provide us with services and to live up to providing the manpower and resources for state needs. The Long Island Expressway is a state road. It is a state obligation to either patrol it or provide the funding as they do for Westchester for the local government to take care of the state's responsibility.

The only notable opposition to the state police taking over the patrol on Sunrise Highway and the Long Island Expressway has been from the Suffolk police unions. They consider this their turf. The state police have repeatedly stated that if ordered by the governor, they will provide the manpower to patrol both the Long Island Expressway and Sunrise Highway.

The Public Safety Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature passed a resolution last week repealing Suffolk County's demand and ultimatum for the state to take over patrolling their state highways. The legislature caved in to the Suffolk County Police Unions' demands. They did not have the courage to stand up for the taxpayers of Suffolk County. The result of their action is that Suffolk County will lose up to \$5 million. The reasons given for caving in to the whims of the police unions is gobbledygook that you would expect to hear in a political campaign from desperate candidates.

The most ridiculous "whereas" in the resolution suggests that the budget for the State of New York contains insufficient funds to reimburse the County of Suffolk for highway patrol functions. Come on, give us a break! The state budget is \$64 billion. Member items are close to a billion dollars; there are items for pork and fat such as the \$14 million Owen Johnson came up with for a ballpark in Suffolk. New York State has the money. Gaffney and the legislature are just letting them off the hook.

We may be fools, but you can't make us believe that there isn't \$4 or \$5 million dollars of petty cash in the state budget that could be used to meet the state's real obligations.

The New York State Police are a time-honored, highly professional law enforcement agency. Upstate, they are the primary police force. After the TWA crash, Suffolk County had only two

divers available and they were only certified for limited depths. The state police were able to respond with twenty-five divers who were able to dive to the depths needed for the recovery effort.

The state police are in charge of the escorting of wreckage and the security of the 2,913-acre Calverton site where the plane is being reassembled. They have a whole team of specialists to meet the law enforcement needs throughout the state. Each officer in the state police is trained more extensively for highway patrol than the Suffolk County police. They can do their own breathalyzer tests and are not dependent upon someone else being assigned to this task.

The state police belong on the state roads. They can do the job and they do it well. If the state police are there, the officers assigned to do Suffolk County highway patrol can be reassigned and their presence felt in neighborhoods and downtown areas.

The Suffolk County police would not suffer a loss of jobs. The people of Suffolk would gain by having excellent patrolling of the Long Island Expressway and Sunrise Highway. The people of Suffolk would gain by the increase of police presence in our local communities. Why would the Suffolk County Legislature turn down a win-win situation for the people of Suffolk County?

The police unions have put incredible pressure on the legislature both directly and through political intimidation. Comments made by many of the legislators when they extended the deadline last June, indicated that they have had it, they wanted no more stalling. The Suffolk County Police unions made them flip flop.

County Executive Gaffney has been all over this issue. The resolution came from his office, which indicates that he has caved in to the unions over common sense and what is good for the people of Suffolk County. So much for profiles in courage.

Suffolk County did not budget for the continuation of patrols last year. Where is the money, going to come from?

The county recently increased its contribution to the Suffolk County Community College from under 4% to 29%. They pierced the cap and now will face others who will demand settlements beyond that budget cap.

Suffolk County is faced with the prospect of paying back the monies it took illegally from taxpayers who were delinquent with their tax money. This amounts to over \$8 million.

In October, when the county officials prepare the budget for 1997, we calculate that Suffolk will be \$20 to \$30 million in the hole. Are you willing to pay for their cowardice? Are you willing to pay for their lack of principle and integrity?

Taxpayers should be up in arms right now. Our legislature and the county executive have caved in to all the special interests. Call your legislator and the county executive today. Let them know you have had it.

And why not?

For the birds

The Suffolk County Legislature has been often characterized as the "funny farm." Legislator David Bishop should be awarded this year's top clown award for his ridiculous bill that would make it illegal to feed the waterfowl in our many ponds and parks. What is the county legislature doing entertaining such nonsense?

Bishop claims that migrating waterfowl are encouraged to stay on Long Island because of people's handouts. He maintains that the bread most often used as food for these waterfowl has little nutritional value, while their droppings are offensive and can cause pollution.

The changing patterns of migrating geese and ducks has little to do with human handouts. It has more to do with weather and our changing agricultural production.

With the exception of 1994, and the winter of 1996, winters have been relatively mild on Long Island. Lakes, bays and rivers, resting places for these birds, did not freeze over with

any great intensity.

Long Island's agricultural crop was predominantly potatoes. Today, this has been replaced with thousands of acres of grapes, corn and sod farms. Sod farms and golf courses are a favorite haunt of the geese for they eat the grasses. It is this food and the abundance of corn that attracts the geese and keeps them in this area. There is only a small percentage of the geese and ducks that frequent our county parks.

On the other hand, there are a lot of young children and families who get a lot of joy out of seeing these magnificent birds and yes, feeding them. Making these kids and their parents lawbreakers is ridiculous.

Why should we as taxpayers be paying money for legislation like this? It is a waste of the legislature's time, energy and resources. If this is the best that Bishop can come up with he is a darn poor excuse for a public servant.

And why not?

LILCO's scare tactics

Sorry, Mr. Catacosinos, we don't buy it.

A 5.5% cut in LILCO's rates should not cause a disruption in service. A 5.5% rate reduction should not cause a severe cutback in maintenance, tree trimming or disruption in the daily routine of your huge monopoly. A 5.5% rate cut should not be applied to service.

For starters, let's look at your bloated salary, your golden parachutes and the personal perks you seem to relish. Then, let us look at the perks the board and the top executives get. Do we need all of these bureaucrats? Are they worth what the company is paying them?

Next, you might look at suspending dividends for the stockholders. Use these profits to pay off the debt. With that debt reduced, if LILCO is managed properly, you should be able to be competitive with the rest of the nation.

Mr. Catacosinos, you are using exactly the same tactics that school boards use to shove budgets down the public's throat. Service is what people

are sensitive to, so you say, let's cut it. School boards with their bloated budgets say, if the budget is not passed, we are going to cut busing, cafeteria service and close down the schools for extracurricular use.

Every time honest public officials make an attempt to control spending and cut rates, the established bureaucracy wheels out a little old lady, a screaming baby in a baby carriage and paints the gloomiest picture that they can while masking and hiding the real fat that has caused the problem.

Mr. Catacosinos and LILCO, you are no different. If the Public Service Commission does what is right, they will reduce the rates at least 5% and then take a scalpel to the balance of your rate plan.

The gig is up, Mr. Catacosinos, you have raped this island long enough. What goes around, comes around. It is your turn to feel a little pain and a little agony.

And why not?

The man who waved

The other night we were flipping through the television channels and came across a brief about the law coming down on an old man. The old codger liked to spend his days sitting in front of his home watching the world go by. His offense was that he smiled and waved at people. They waved back and some of them honked their horn. The neighbors didn't like him sitting out front and found his gestures of friendship unbearable.

What is this world coming to? A few years back, coming from Southampton, a little old man used to sit in front of his home. We saw him every day. We made eye contact and every morning he was there to wave his warm greeting, and we waved back to him. We actually looked forward to this daily exercise. He was out there on both warm and cold days.

While doing our Christmas shopping, we thought of him and, on the spur of the moment, decided to buy him a seat warmer and a couple of those gel

bags that radiate heat.

On Christmas Eve, we were going to leave them wrapped on his seat, a surprise from Santa. Sadly, he was not there during the week before Christmas.

A few days after Christmas, a young woman was in the yard. We stopped and inquired about him. She graciously informed us that he had passed away a few days before Christmas.

There is not a day we go past his home that we do not think of him. He was old, but he still wanted to make a contribution. He still wanted to bring a little bit of joy into others' lives.

We were angry at the television report about a community in New Jersey threatening one of its docile residents like this. Who was he hurting? How much joy was he bringing into other people's lives? We hope all those who have experienced his good-natured presence will protest to the New Jersey authorities.

And why not?