

A matter of fairness and trust

Most relationships in our personal lives as well as our business endeavors are either contractual arrangements or explicit verbal agreements. To work, they must be based upon fairness and trust.

In education, students enter school in September and expect to move to the next grade or graduate in June. They're expected to put forth a specific amount of effort, both in and out of class. In return for this commitment of time and effort, they expect to have a certain quality of education and stability during the year.

Teachers, like the students, make a

commitment in September to fulfill their obligations and educate the students to an agreed-upon standard, knowing the playing field and the funds that they have available to utilize.

Parents and taxpayers, in spring of each year, review the budget as proposed by the school board, understand the tax rate they are expected to pay to provide the funds to run the schools and educate the children. If they can afford the tax rate, which is the result of the budget, they pass it. If they can't, they defeat it.

The school boards, in preparing the budget, examine the state aid be-

ing provided by the legislature and the governor. They factor the state aid into the budget and count on it being stable as part of the budgetary planning. They look at the state's word as a given, what they say they will do is contractual, explicit, if not in writing.

For the second year in a row, Governor Cuomo has announced, mid-year, that his failure to adequately project income and his inability to control spending has resulted in a shortfall in state finances. Cuomo wants the shortfall made up by Long Island school districts. He wants our

school districts, midway through their fiscal year, to find ways to cut back. This is not fair to the students, to the teachers and other contracted employees, and most certainly unfair to the school boards which have to try and scramble to make up for Cuomo's mistake.

This year, Cuomo is demanding that the proportion of state aid be cut back for Long Island at twice the rate of the rest of the state. People upstate, with their big-city mentalities, like Cuomo, look at Long Island as a center of wealth. They do not realize that when the bottom line is examined, because of the high cost of living here, there is relatively little disposable income left over.

We believe the state has an explicit commitment, although no written contract, to provide the districts with the state aid it agreed on during the budget process. They made a promise, and promises must be kept. Failure to deliver on this commitment is morally wrong, unethical and unfair to all concerned.

Outlines have been given to Cuomo that would have enabled the state to cut back substantially on its rampant spending, only to be ignored. Contrary to popular misconception, this year's state budget was four percent higher than last year's. Numerous new taxes were imposed to fund Cuomo's reckless spending goals. Even with an enlarged state budget, spending on educational aid to Long Island was severely slashed, while welfare costs were allowed to run amuck. It costs New York State almost four times the funding to deliver social services than it costs California, which has 50 percent more residents served. State government, during the last nine years, has doubled in size with little in the way of productivity or improved services for the taxpaying resident.

There is no doubt that there is plenty of fat in the educational budgets. The administration area, which has seen an enormous increase in the last decade while we have had declining enrollment, can be revamped, consolidated and, in many instances, eliminated. Social programs designed to educate the "whole child" rather than concentrate on the necessary basics, can be eliminated. Wasteful mandates, which Cuomo promised to remove, could be terminated. But, all these things being true does not give Cuomo the right to renege on the commitment that he and the legislature made to the local school districts.

Long Island taxpayers and our quality of life is under siege. People like Cuomo want to control us, tell us what to do and then take the money away from us that is needed to do it. Give us the money to fulfill your mandates or give us the freedom so we can choose what's best for ourselves.

And why not?

A chance to start anew

Bob Gaffney, as the new county executive, has a rare opportunity to start at the top in restructuring county government.

There are approximately 300 exempt positions that he will have direct control over. The people in these positions serve at the pleasure of the county executive. Gaffney will take over the reins of a county government in the throes of bankruptcy. We do not have enough cash to meet our obligations. In addition to what is currently being bandied about, we believe there can be an additional \$100 million in expenditures which have not been funded that could come to the surface. As a result, this would cause a deficit as of January 1, the first day Gaffney will take over the reins of county government.

Gaffney is currently going through the positions that he can fill. Halpin did the same thing when he took over from former acting County Executive Michael LoGrande. Gaffney can learn from Halpin's mistakes. He should ask for the resignations of every exempt employee and, at the same time, request a resume. Those who are qualified to remain in the positions and have proved by their record their worth to the county should be re-interviewed. If they are deemed worthy of rehiring, their salary, benefits and perks should be renegotiated. Salaries should be realigned according to the county's ability to pay. They should be comparable to those in private enterprise, both in salary amounts and the value of the perks and benefits offered.

Here is an excellent opportunity to eliminate county automobiles. Managers and appointed officials should be expected to provide their own transportation to and from work. Car pools should be established in the work centers that the county employees can only draw upon for truly official business. Sick time, personal days and vacation time should be brought in line with the average offered by both small and large businesses here in Suffolk County. These appointed officials should be made to realize that they are in management positions. They are hired to get a job done, their

expected work week is between 55 and 60 hours, as is the case with management in private industry. There is no compensatory time or overtime. Just because someone else may have sat in the seat who earned \$60,000 to \$80,000 dollars a year does not mean that the seat is worth that. The qualifications of the candidate and his/her former compensation should be of prime concern. Politics always plays a part in the selection of appointed positions. It still should, but only if the qualifications are superior to any other candidate.

Gaffney has an opportunity to slash the cost of operating Suffolk County right at the top. He can eliminate no-show jobs and jobs held by

people of questionable value. Many positions currently held by appointees need not be—their positions can be consolidated and folded into other positions. Whole departments can be eliminated, other departments can be consolidated. The bureaucracy of county government must be cut in these hard economic times, and the top is the place to start.

There should be a sign behind the interviewer's desk: "If you don't like what we are offering, go out into the work place and get a better job."

The taxpayers have said "enough is enough" and the Gaffney administration should start restructuring at the top.

And why not?



Put yourself in their shoes!

You're proud, you're a good parent, you have been able to take care of your own. Then life deals you a lousy hand because of an accident, sickness or another tragedy. You're broke.

Christmas is coming, you can see it on the faces of your children. They only need jackets, shirts, pants and other necessities of life, but they long for that special toy or two. They know there are differences, they hear their parents talking in hushed tones. Their life has been disrupted as Mom, Dad, or both, no longer go to work. They may be bedridden or just without a job. How do you tell the children that Santa will not come this year? How do you send the little ones off to school without a warm coat or in shoes with holes in them? This is a most difficult situation for any parent to be in. Most parents are generally too proud to let anyone know of their circumstances. They won't go to Social Services, and probably would not qualify if they did. They reach out to churches and other recognized charitable institutions. It's heart-wrenching, and with this year's demands, the cupboards are all but bare.

These are the people "The Group" reaches out to. "The Group" is comprised of people who have come together for the last decade to share their good fortune, at Christmastime, with those less fortunate. We pool our own money, our time and our talents to make sure that the little ones are provided for, the little ones of people who under normal conditions would be able to provide for themselves, but because of circumstances beyond their control, can't.

This year we have doubled our goal, both in fund-raising and in the number of families we intend to help. At the writing of this editorial, because of this year's unusual circum-

stances, the requirements for help have exceeded our ability to provide. We are rapidly running out of funds. Where in the past winter coats and other expensive items were kept to a minimum, this year's needs are much greater.

"The Group" operates under the cloak of anonymity. In many cases, the recipients are not even aware that we will be helping them. A few days before Christmas, gaily wrapped packages with the children's names on them are delivered to their homes. The labels simply state, "from Santa."

In the packages are necessities, such as socks, underwear, pants, shirts, winter coats and other clothing items. Along with the necessities are some of the luxuries that make Christmas memorable for the children. The parents do not know who we are or where we come from and do not even have to say thanks.

Our reward is quite simple. On Christmas morning, we have the warm feeling of knowing that we have reached out and helped someone in a meaningful way. Our motto has always been, "There, but for the grace

of God, go I."

When we have the money, we spend it, for we never know when we will be dealt a bad hand and hope there will be somebody else out there who will reach out and help us.

If you can help in any way this year, your contribution will make some small child's Christmas dream a reality.

"The Group's" address is: c/o P.O. Box 167, Riverhead, New York 11901. Thank you.

And why not?

It is time to question

It was soon after we published the first edition of Suffolk Life that we learned to be a good editorial writer. You cannot hip shoot. Hip shooting or reaching a conclusion before question and thought is dangerous and a potentially disastrous situation.

Suffolk Life is noted for its strong opposition to the Shoreham nuclear power plant. We were fiercely in the forefront in stopping this plant from going on line. The Shoreham issue was massive in context and very hard to thoroughly understand. We reached our conclusion on Shoreham only after long and hard research and thought, a weighing of the rhetoric and the facts. Once we had reached our conclusions, we devoted every bit of energy, power and space that we could to inform the public about the pros and cons and logically lead them to understand the ramifications they would face.

Another Shoreham is brewing on the horizon—the conversion of the

Calverton/Grumman facility into a commercial airport for transporting cargo nationally and internationally. People are already lining up and taking sides, firm, unmovable positions. We consider this unfortunate, and simply not very intelligent. As the framework for the proposition has not been developed, questions have no answers, and the facts, even in their simplest form, are not known.

There probably isn't a person on Eastern Long Island who would not like to see all future development stopped in its tracks. I am here, and I don't want any outsiders coming in. On the flip side, there is a large portion of our population which is struggling every day to make ends meet. There just isn't enough money to provide many necessities and few luxuries.

We want a better quality of life, based upon improvements in our income and the services that can be provided by our governments. When both sides are weighed, there aren't enough

current resources to fulfill both desires. Compromise must be reached and, hopefully, both the ends can be met. This requires giving in order to get. The best way you can determine how much you want to give is to know the facts and weigh the consequences. The best way to get is to look at what you will receive and weigh it against the changes that may take place.

We would encourage both sides of the Calverton question to support a quest for answers, rather than digging in their heels and going to war. As a newspaper, this is what we will do. If, when the facts become apparent and Calverton has the potential of being another Shoreham, we will fight it with every bit of our energy. When the facts are known, if the proposals for Calverton are reasonable and, on balance, an enhancement to our quality of life, which includes the economy, we will support the proposition with equal strength. We would urge everyone to do the same.

And why not?

Marino: A Republican leader?

The three "M's" run New York State. Mario, Miller and Marino. Mario, the governor, is a liberal Democrat and you expect him to act like it. Miller is assembly majority leader and is another liberal Democrat whose base and power is New York City, and you expect him to take care of that constituency. Marino is the senate majority leader. He is a Republican, and you would expect him to not only act as a Republican but as a check and balance against the other two.

Marino has been the senate majority leader for the last two years. When he was first elected by the senators to the leadership position, we were pleased because it brought an end to Warren Anderson, who had persistently favored upstate New York and some very big business interests that were near and dear to his heart and his wallet.

Marino, we felt, was in the best

position to understand his Long Island constituents, their needs and their aspirations. As a Republican in the State of New York, he could force a more conservative government that could halt the runaway spending under Mario and Miller.

Marino has been a huge disappointment. During his first term, he was responsible for the longest budget delay in the history of New York. This would not have been all bad if he had achieved something by it. Instead of putting a halt to spending or protecting Long Island's interests, Marino caved in, state spending increased and Long Island paid for it.

During Marino's second year in office, he again delayed budget approval and ended up settling for a \$4 billion increase in state spending, while accepting a cutback in aid to education and a reduction in state assistance for local municipalities. Although these reductions were state-

wide, Long Island bore the brunt of the cutbacks.

Marino has the ability to stop Mario and Miller from passing any budget since it requires the approval of the senate. But Marino even allowed the exclusion of the minority leadership of the senate and the assembly from the budget-making process. He effectively blocked any opposing viewpoint to the big three.

The Republican party in the State of New York has been in disarray for nearly a decade. It has been devoid of leadership and its voice has been muted. The Republicans have failed to put up a loyal opposition to the liberal Democrats and now must share in the blame for the financial disaster the state is in.

Marino has one last opportunity to stand up and be a man and not a wimp. He must have the backbone to stand up to Mario and Miller and say

that the Republicans are not approving any budget that does not do away with deficits, one-shot gimmicks and a giveaway of the hard-earned money of the working taxpayers in this state.

State government must be cut back in every aspect. The size of the staff reduced to the pre-Mario days. The big cost factors—welfare and education—must be brought under control. If California can provide services for a third more people on welfare at half the cost New York is able to, we must be able to do likewise. If other areas in the northeast are able to educate their children at half to a third less than us, we must also do the same. Finances of New York State must be believable and realistic. Budgets must be accurate and contain no disguised deficits.

Marino has the power to do it, but the big question is, does he have the will and the gumption?

And why not?

Why not pay for performance?

Most businesses pay their employees based upon their performance and productivity. Many profitable businesses reward productivity with bonuses.

Suffolk County Executive-elect Robert Gaffney last week announced his picks for his chief deputies and their salary levels. We had hoped to see a more experienced and stronger management team, but maybe it is time to give newer and younger people the opportunity to prove their mettle.

We were disheartened that former acting County Executive Michael LoGrande was not included among Gaffney's selections. LoGrande is one of the

brightest and most seasoned public servants in Suffolk County. He had been involved in the Gaffney campaign for almost a year, and it was a foregone conclusion he would play an important part in the new administration. He would bring with him his years of experience with government, and he knew the players and the mistakes that had been made in the past, dating back to the Cohalan era. This kind of expertise will be vitally needed by Gaffney if his administration is to succeed.

LoGrande currently is the chairman of the Suffolk County Water Authority, where he has cleaned up the mess, stabi-

lized rates and has returned productivity to the authority. LoGrande was reluctant to leave the authority where there are still situations that are in the process of being corrected. It is sad that a compromise could not have been worked out which would have allowed LoGrande to continue for a few months at the authority while a search was conducted for a new leader of his caliber. At the same time, he could have been involved in the formative days of Gaffney's administration.

In making the announcement of his first choices, Gaffney said that all are being brought in at salaries which are at

least five percent less than the salaries of those who held those positions previously. This is a good, symbolic start, but it is not enough. Many of the appointees do not have the years of experience. We suggest to Mr. Gaffney that he borrow a page from the capitalist world. Instead of granting big salaries up front, offer salaries reflecting at least a 25 percent reduction of what the current administration was paying, but then offer a bonus of 20 percent for productivity based on three rather simple criteria:

First, the total expenditures for the county must be brought in under appropriation or the budget as adopted for 1992. Second, the department, or the area budget that they are directly responsible for, must be brought in at least 10 percent under the discretionary portion of that budget. Third, the productivity and the services rendered must be maintained or increased. If these three criteria are met at the end of the fiscal year, the executives, like their counterparts in business, would be eligible for the bonuses.

This system would offer them the incentive to clamp down on wasteful spending, eliminate duplication and programs that serve relatively few. Not only would the element of competition be brought into their own department, but they would become their brother's keeper, as their bonuses would be lost if the county's total budget had a shortfall.

Bonuses and incentives for productivity and managing well are commonplace in business, but they will work in government as well, if tried.

And why not?

What are we fearing?

Personally take inventory, take stock of yourself. Are you any worse off than you were a year ago? Chances are you are not ahead, nor are you way behind. Most people are still employed, earning fairly decent incomes. Perhaps overtime has been cut or second jobs eliminated. Most businesses are still in operation, although they may not be as profitable as they once were, particularly in comparison to the late eighties.

The late eighties brought us unrealistic incomes and profits from our endeavors and our businesses. The good

times rolled and finally came to an end. The end, however, was not a disaster, it was a return to what had been the norm during the early eighties. Yes, we all have had to do with a little less and we miss the good times. The difference is one single emotion: fear.

We have been fed a steady diatribe of how horrible things are. Even those of us who are eternal optimists have had to stop and look. What we see is the classic, a glass with fifty percent of capacity, is it half full or half empty? If we like to be down, depressed and enjoy anxiety,

we see it as half empty. If we believe in ourselves, our fellowman and the opportunities that surround us, we see it as half full. We see the world around us as filled with opportunities waiting to be taken advantage of. A full glass cannot be added to. A half full glass begs to be refilled.

We believe in ourselves and those around us, and we intend to see the world toasting with full glasses in the future. We do not fear life. We accept the challenge. Will you?

And why not?

Cargoport plan: facts or fiction?

A proposal to create a major cargoport at the Grumman facility in Calverton is fast becoming a topic of conversation and debate. As we noted in an editorial last week, this is the time to study the issue and raise questions about the possible impact and projected benefits. The potential economic benefits, if projections hold up, are too important to hip-shoot away.

As important as the economics may be, however, there are other aspects to this proposal that must be carefully scrutinized. One came up at a gathering of Eastern Long Island Executives, held December 9 on the eastern campus of Suffolk Community College. In a professionally prepared, slick video presentation, Governor Mario Cuomo extolled the virtues of the cargoport proposal. During that presentation, Cuomo stated an authority--the Long Island Transportation Authority--would conduct the study. He made the statement as if it was a foregone conclusion that an all-encompassing authority had already been created. An authority with the power of eminent domain, superseding local zoning, planning and the will of the people. WOW!

"What authority?" we asked a Cuomo representative at the meeting. He had no answer. The same question was posed to Steve Villano, an official in Cuomo's press office. He responded that there was an explanation in the official proposal released by Cuomo, entitled "Long Island in the New, New

York, Building Long Island's Fiscal and Economic Future." But on page 14 of that document, the authority is mentioned only in a subhead, which states: "Establishment of the Long Island Transportation Development Authority to explore the development of Calverton Airport and related facilities." That's all it says about the authority--nothing about its powers, duties, or who would appoint its members.

Villano said the authority would explore development on Long Island. Legislation creating the authority, which is expected to be filed in January, would be similar to the Long Island Power Authority legislation which created that agency, he added.

If that's the case, we already have a serious problem. The Long Island Power Authority was created to combat the Shoreham fiasco, and to work toward easing the energy crisis here. It was the product of local folks trying to resolve a local problem. The effort to ensure its passage, and ultimately Cuomo's signature, became mired in political maneuvering. Cuomo insisted on changes in the original legislation to satisfy his desires. He either got his way, or the bill would not be signed. The final authority was a far stretch from the original concept initiated by the citizens.

When LIPA was created, Cuomo wound up making the majority of appointments. He stacked the deck, pure and simple. In so doing, Cuomo moulded LIPA into what he wanted it to

be, and it became his toy. When he fashioned a giveaway deal with LILCO, his LIPA allies swiftly gave their approval, despite the tremendous impact on the ratepayers. To this day, with State Consumer Board Executive Director Richard Kessel as its chairman, LIPA does what Cuomo wants it to do. The local representatives, who are in the minority, have been out-voted time and again.

If this is what Cuomo is planning for the Transportation Development Authority, count us out. If it is Cuomo's intent to fill the authority with his cronies, and make it another dangerous plaything with which he can run roughshod over Suffolk County, he has a fight on his hands. Cuomo has too often shown his scorn for Long Island for us to accept offering him an additional opportunity to do so. Cuomo has already placed a tremendous financial burden on our taxpayers by withholding promised state aid for our schools and governments, while continuing to issue costly mandates.

Cuomo has also added to the staggering financial tax burden our residents face with his lack of leadership in dealing with our garbage disposal crisis. The unreasonable, dictatorial actions of his Department of Environmental Conservation will one day, mark our words, bankrupt local taxpayers.

It has long been alleged that organized crime rules the garbage industry. The same is said about the cargo industry. The major garbage haulers, who

have also invaded the recycling industry, are getting rich at the taxpayers' expense. Is Cuomo taking us down that same road again?

The cargoport proposal has been proclaimed as the answer to our area's economic needs. Proponents claim it will bring industry, adding to our tax base, and help create new jobs. Dr. Lee Koppleman, LI Planning Board executive director, who will conduct the study, has already projected that 20,000 to 30,000 jobs, with another 50,000 to 75,000 "support" jobs, will result. Realistic? Pie in the sky? What firms will come? What kind of jobs will be created? What noise impact will there be? What kind of environmental impact, population growth? Who will support the services needed by those who come for the new jobs?

There are many questions. Thus far, there are few answers. But, make no mistake about it: we have already lived through one grandiose proposal which turned into a financial and safety fiasco. Its name was Shoreham. We were promised electricity "so cheap you can't meter it." Instead, we got the highest electricity rates in the nation, and spent millions to kill this monster which threatened the health and safety of our people.

We want proof, not mere statements or empty projections. We won't be fooled again. Governor, fool us once, shame on you. Fool us twice, shame on us. Heed our words. We don't trust you!

And why not?

SEASON'S GREETINGS TO ALL



- ★ David J. Willmott ★
- ★ Brenda Andres ★
- ★ Trudy Ash ★ Robin Beatty ★
- ★ Karen Beck ★ Robert Biel ★ Karen Brown ★
- ★ Mable Brown ★ Peter Bucci ★ Patricia Butti ★
- ★ Joan Cancellarich ★ Denise Olsen ★
- ★ Joseph Capozzoli ★ Gabrielle Carmody ★ Marie Chapman ★
- ★ Susan Cianflone ★ Arthur Clark ★ Bryan Clay ★ Robert Corry ★
- ★ Richard Darby ★ Vicki DeVere ★ Peter DiPeri ★
- ★ Barbara Driscoll ★ Lisa Edelstein ★ James Figurniak ★
- ★ Mary Fitzgibbon ★ Frank Frolke ★ Laura Frolke ★ Raymond Gagliano ★
- ★ Timothy Gannon ★ Stefanie Gilheany ★ Janine Giordano ★ Eileen Gorman ★
- ★ Martin Graham ★ Lou Grasso ★ Colin Grattan ★ Arlene Greene ★
- ★ Don Griffith ★ David Gundersen ★ Heather Hadley ★ Robert Hall ★
- ★ Renee Hannafey ★ Kerry Harrison ★ Sheryl Heather ★ Carl Herrmann ★
- ★ Walter Hoefler ★ Fern Jacobs ★ Kenneth Juliano ★ Sheila Kamran ★ Patricia Keane ★
- ★ Barbara Lampasona ★ William Lawton ★ Karin Leinfus ★
- ★ Nicholas Locorriere ★ Kim Macomber ★ John Mangarella ★ Susan McAvoy ★
- ★ Cynthia McCarthy ★ Ken McCarthy ★ Warren McKnight ★ Walter McNeil ★ Lisa McPhillips ★
- ★ Richard Merchant ★ Christopher Michaels ★ Marilyn Minerva ★ Herbert Moller ★
- ★ Donald Moog ★ Kim Morris ★ Christopher Nagorski ★ Barbara Niebuhr ★ Ted Nienburg ★
- ★ Harlan Okun ★ Sylvia Page ★ Kenneth Pearsall ★ Marie Prechtl ★ Victor Prusinowski ★ Jean Raymond ★
- ★ Peter Raynor ★ Janet Reardon ★ Mark Reeve ★ Loretta Reisig ★ Luis Reyes ★ Stephen Ring ★
- ★ Linda Rogacki ★ Richard Safaty ★ Mary Schroeder ★ Roni Schunk ★ Linda Schuster ★ Allan Silverman ★
- ★ Anne Marie Sitbon ★ Michael Spina ★ Herbert Stillie ★ Joan Sullivan ★ Duane Sundquist ★ Claire Swanik ★ Jean Testa ★
- ★ Elizabeth Tonis ★ Patricia Tuozzo ★ Ted Tureski ★ Catherine Varrone ★ Frank Virga ★ Thomas Ward ★ David Willmott Jr. ★
- ★ Jonathan Willmott ★
- ★ Michael Willmott ★
- ★ Melissa Willmott ★
- ★ Patrice Willmott ★
- ★ Doris Wilson ★
- ★ Roger Wilson ★
- ★ Mark Woolley ★
- ★ Marcy Zebrowski ★

Christmas 1991

Over two thousand years ago, God in His eternal wisdom delivered to the Israelites His only Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus was immaculately conceived by Mary. Mary bore the Son of God in a stable in Bethlehem.

God sent His only Son as an act of love, love for all mankind regardless of color or creed. His Son possessed the keys that would open the Gates of Heaven. His time spent on this earth would provide the foundation and the book of rules, the Bible, our encyclopedia on how to live our lives.

We celebrate the birth of Christ on the happiest of Christian holidays, Christmas. In my quiet times, I often reflect upon God's plan for mankind. I always seem to come to the conclusion that He must be one heck of a guy, because I know I could never give up one of my children if I knew they would suffer the kind of death Jesus suffered.

The love that God has for all of us knows no bounds. Christmas is for giving. What can we give back to God for what He has given us? The answer to this riddle is simple: God wants us to give of ourselves to our fellowman. He gave the example in the giving of His Son.

No, He does not want us to give our children up to others; He only wants us to give our love. Love can be given to our fellowman in many different ways. Each of us, on this glorious and happy holiday, should examine our conscience and make a simple determination of what act of love over and above the norm we will try to accomplish for the coming year. If each of us did one extraordinary act of love for someone else, our world would be better and, collectively, we would be at peace forever.

The entire staff here at Suffolk Life wishes all our readers a joyous and Merry Christmas. We wish our non-Christian friends peace and a happy holiday. And why not?

