

WILLMOTT & WHY NOTS

DAVID J. WILLMOTT SR., EDITOR

We Finally Won

With Thanksgiving just behind us, the county legislature gave the residents of Suffolk much to be thankful for.

The courts had denied the residents of Suffolk County the right to vote on an amendment to the Suffolk County Charter which would have ensured that county government use its resources to oppose the proposed LILCO-LIPA deal. The court, in a strange decision, disenfranchised the voters and took away from them their sacred right to order the government to act on their behalf.

Last Tuesday, the legislature voted to provide the funds for the consultants and law firm to oppose the LIPA deal before the Public Service Commission (PSC), the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Earlier that day, the legislature also approved imposing a quarter percent sales tax increase to take care of the \$800 million certiorari penalty due LILCO, or actually LILCO's ratepayers. This was the glue that held the proposed LILCO-LIPA deal together and it was the driving force behind Suffolk Republican support of the deal. With the sales tax out of the way, Brookhaven Town is held harmless and the pressure is off Republican Party Chairman John Powell and the Brookhaven Republican Legislators.

The approval of these resolutions came about in a series of votes on the individual items.

Ironically, the Brookhaven Republicans "took a powder" on the first vote which pertained to the consultants intervening with the PSC proceedings for the purpose of actively opposing a LILCO-LIPA-BUG merger or any transaction involving LILCO-LIPA-BUG which may be

adverse for Suffolk County.

Legislator Joseph Caracappa was not in attendance at all. According to the presiding officer, Caracappa had stated earlier that he had family business he had to attend to and could stay no later than 4 p.m. Family business must be given consideration, but when some of the most important business facing the county is before the legislature, one would think that Caracappa had his priorities a little mixed up.

Legislator Fred Towle, who represents Southeastern Brookhaven, was acting like a nervous ninny. Just before the vote to engage the law firm to oppose the LIPA deal before the PSC, the IRS and FERC, he made a mad dash to the back room. He did not appear for any of the four votes on this issue even though the presiding officer repeatedly requested that those who were AWOL return to the podium.

Towle just didn't have the courage to return. He was seen peeking his head out, hoping it would all go away. Yet, when Towle was running for reelection, he claimed to be adamant in his opposition to the proposed LIPA plan. He either had a change of heart or he just plain lied to this newspaper and to our readers.

Legislator Martin Haley, another one who was AWOL, failed to come to the podium for the first vote. When it was obvious that the measure had passed, eleven in favor with two abstentions, he and Legislator Angie Carpenter, from Islip, reappeared and voted "no" on the rest of the items.

During our interviews, Haley had stated very emphatically that he only favored the proposed LIPA deal as a way of getting the tax certiorari out of the way. He opposed the rest of the deal, raising the

point that it is ridiculous the plan calls for Long Island's ratepayers to be responsible for LILCO's Nine Mile Point 2 nuclear plant.

Carpenter voted against the county fighting the deal. During our interview, she opposed the deal and particularly felt that it was unfair for all of the county to bail out Brookhaven in the same proportion. We heard discussion at the meeting suggesting that her drive to become presiding officer overshadowed her sensibilities.

Legislator Tom Finlay, also of Islip, who was denied the nomination to run for reelection, took a powder as well. We found this strange, because in the past Finlay has been a stand-up guy. He often took the unpopular side. You may have disagreed with him, but you could admire the depth of his convictions. There was no reason for him to hide in the back room during this important vote. Even if he voted against the measure, he had nothing to lose.

We learned after the meeting that County Republican Leader John Powell was also in the back room, obviously twisting arms for the governor. We found this strange as Powell had made a commitment that if the certiorari issue could be settled, he would use his influence with the governor to kill the deal. He had said he was opposed to the bailout of LILCO, but because of the certiorari he was forced to support the deal. The legislature took care of the certiorari, yet Powell was still working behind the scenes, still trying to kill the county's opposition. Why?

The county legislature's vote to continue opposition means that the proposed LILCO-LIPA issue will remain alive. County residents will be protected and the deal will not be shoved down our throats with-

out a fight.

The governor is running for reelection next November and he wanted the LILCO-LIPA issue out of the way. He is not going to get his wish. This will be the issue right through next November.

With the advent of self-generating, competitive power that will sink the LIPA bonds, Pataki would be wise to pull the plug on LILCO-LIPA as soon as possible.

The heroes of the day were Maxine Postal from Babylon, who provided the crucial vote for the passage of the sales tax; Mike D'Andre from Smithtown had also been under incredible pressure and is to be congratulated for standing up and doing what is right for the people; Michael Caracciolo, whose district is on the East End and the eastern portion of Brookhaven, and George Guldi, who represents the South Fork, also hung tough and provided the leadership.

Those legislators who took a powder and were AWOL should hang their heads in shame. The voters did not elect them to avoid crucial votes by hiding in the back room. Even if they had taken Ex-lax and had personal problems, it should not take that long to solve. These legislators were elected to take the tough votes, right, wrong or indifferent. Hiding is not an option and should never be allowed again.

Legislators Tonna and Binder, because of business and legal involvements with LILCO-BUG, were not able to cast a vote, but remained in attendance for all votes.

The majority of the legislators did themselves proud. They did the right thing for the right reasons. They have given the people of Suffolk County hope and, appropriately, a reason to give thanks.

And why not?

Legislative Courage and Greed

The Suffolk County Legislature passed the Omnibus Budget last week with a surprise attached to it.

Our system of government requires the county executive to submit a budget to the legislature. The legislature reviews the budget, and gives and takes according to the will of the majority.

After Gaffney submitted the budget, he wanted to add on another \$4.2 million for the Suffolk County Police. The legislature saw this as a blatant attempt by the county executive to try to spend more money than was needed.

Allegedly, this money was for hiring new police officers. Currently, Suffolk County is barred by the courts from hiring any new police. The testing procedures were found to be inappropriate by the justice department and the results of the last test for police were thrown out. There is no new class to draw upon in the coming year, so there will be no new officers hired by the county police department.

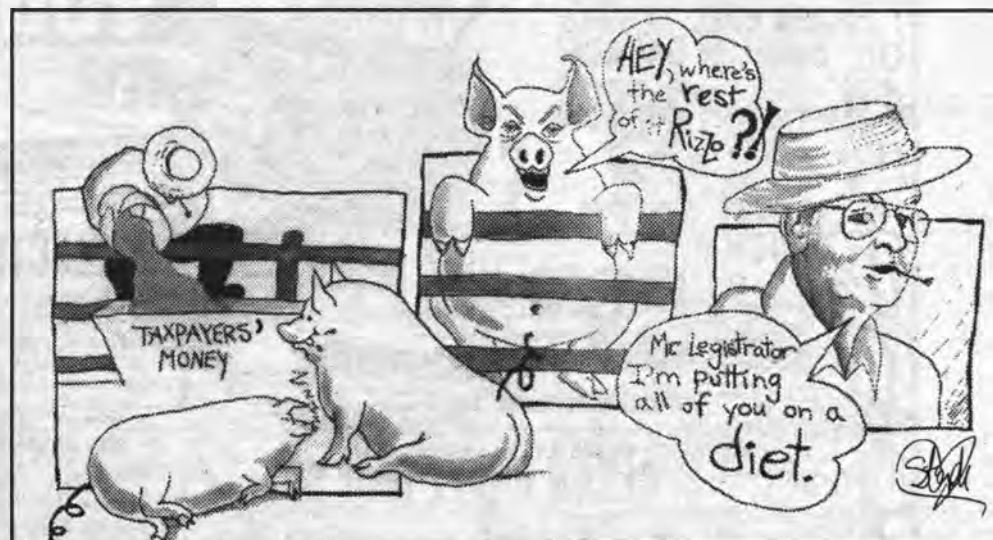
Gaffney wanted the money put in anyway, and once in the police budget, it had been spent. The legislature reduced Gaffney's

proposed 8.8% tax increase to a 3.6% increase. This took courage, because our legislators were besieged by delegates of the police union and received a threat from Suffolk County Police Commissioner John Gallagher to cut 55 positions. This is a tactic that is often employed—cut essential services or give us the money. It is often a ruse that is based on fear and rarely based on fact. The legislators stood up to this pressure.

Unfortunately, many of these legislators succumbed to their own greed.

Last year, the legislature adopted a practice taken from the "How To" book of the state legislature. The Suffolk legislature granted itself funding for "member items," the legislators call it a "contingent account." Each legislator was awarded \$65,000 to hand out in their district to various nonprofit organizations. This money was used to win favor with special interests within the district. When this hoax was discovered, the taxpayers were in an uproar.

During our election interviews with the legislators, we questioned each candidate. Almost to a person, they agreed that



they were either going to eliminate member items entirely, or limit the funding to \$25,000 per legislator. They didn't; they went back on their word.

The Omnibus Budget calls for each legislator to be given \$58,500 to spend as they wish. This is a pure slush fund, pork at its worst. We are disappointed that the legislators lied and went back on their word. The county executive can line item

veto this slush fund and should.

If he doesn't, and lets the pigs wallow in their own greed, their presiding officer should cross out appropriations in the legislative budget. Joe Rizzo, the legislature's current presiding officer, is against this wasteful spending and has promised to oppose the appropriations.

And why not?

8 WILLMOTTS & WHY NOTS

DAVID J. WILLMOTT SR., EDITOR

The Group Is About Giving

On a daily basis, we field a number of phone calls from Suffolk residents asking what "The Group" is all about. We will try to answer some of the most commonly asked questions.

Our mission is to provide Christmas for children whose parents have experienced unanticipated difficulty in their life. Under normal circumstances, beneficiaries of "The Group" are able to take care of their own. They generally are proud working class wage earners, but because of an accident, a medical relapse or some other unanticipated situation, they are forced to tell their children Santa won't come this year.

"The Group" is in its 18th year. By pooling our time, our efforts and our resources, we are able to make the difference, so that Santa does come to these families.

We are not an organized charity. Several years back, we explored the idea of becoming a nonprofit organization. When we learned of how much it would cost in legal, accounting and administrative fees, we made a group decision not to become an organized charity. In order to become a charity, money that could be spent on the children would have to be diverted to the lawyers, accountants and business managers.

Not one cent of the funds raised by

"The Group" is spent on as much as a postage stamp. Any administrative or overhead fees we do incur are donated.

We also made the decision that there were people who wanted to give for no other reason than because they wanted to help others. They didn't care about the tax deduction, they just wanted to reach out and make sure the kids had a Christmas.

Everything is done by volunteers. Each year, between 40 and 50 people go shopping for the needs of the children. We have three goals, first is to clothe the children, from underwear to outerwear. Often a reversal of fortune that the family has faced has left the kids without new winter clothes and they have outgrown and out-used what they had.

Second, we want to bring joy to the children and that means toys, books and games. No, we can't buy the kids everything that they want, but we do try to get every child at least one thing they do want and then fill in with other great gifts.

Our third goal is to buy food, not only for Christmas Day but for the days and weeks ahead.

Over 100 volunteers wrap the gifts individually and a day or two before Christmas, they are delivered to the homes. The parents do not know our identity. They don't know where we came

from or why they were chosen. They just know there is a community out there which has recognized them in their time of need.

There are no lists of contributors published, not even a thank you note is sent out because this would take away from the kids. No one is given credit for the endeavor. We are just nameless people coming together to help others. It's pure giving, without a temporal reward.

Our gift is the knowledge that on Christmas morning some special children are gleefully opening packages under their Christmas tree. They think that "Mom and Dad came through, Santa did arrive."

The parents, who hopefully take credit, never have to look over their shoulder and wonder who befriended them. The whole world is a universe, hun-

dreds of people reaching out and sharing their resources so that Christmas can be a special day for the children.

Although we are not structured and have no formal organization, hundreds of residents have joined to help our efforts become a reality. Without even notification, the volunteers regroup each year, spending hundreds of hours of their own time during this busy season. We do this because we believe, "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

If you would like to be part of "The Group," we solicit your contributions. We can only do as many families, as many kids, as our combined resources allow. You may send your contributions to "The Group," c/o P.O. Box 167, Riverhead, New York 11901. Thank you for your generosity.

And why not?

Stony Brook To Run Lab

Stony Brook University, in association with Bettelle Memorial Institute of Columbus, Ohio, has been selected to run Brookhaven National Lab. John Marburger, who was chairman of the Cuomo commission that investigated the Shoreham nuclear power plant, has been named president. Marburger had been president of Stony Brook University.

Brookhaven National Lab has many problems, both environmentally and from a public relations perspective. Under the former management of the lab, personnel stonewalled the communities' concerns about possible health threats and pollution of the environment.

The lab, a Federal Department of Energy (DOE) installation, from its inception was shrouded in secrecy. The work being conducted was originally military oriented.

During the fifties, sixties and seventies, BNL was quasi-military facility with a blend of military applications and medical and scientific research.

The core of the lab is the atomic reactor. The reactor has been leaking nuclear properties into the ground and the lab only recently owned up to this devastation.

The Department of Energy suspended the previous operator, Associated Universities, after 50 years of operations. Senator Alfonse D'Amato and Congressman Michael Forbes have called for the atomic reactor to be shut down permanently. They do not see any way that it can operate without a possibility of further failures and contaminating our sole source aquifer. Our Washington representatives did not trust the former operators. Will they trust the new consortium?

We personally have had experience with Marburger when we served on the Cuomo Commission. He was an excellent chairman and he did a credible job of seeking out the facts. The members of the commission did not learn until the very end that Marburger was pro-nuclear energy. There were those of us on the

commission who questioned decisions he made as chairman. His former pro-nuclear stance, we believe, is still his current stance.

When the Cuomo Commission was first put together, it was apparent that the members chosen leaned toward opening Shoreham. There were only two delegates who leaned the other way, Marge Harrison, Governor Cuomo's appointee, and myself, who was a Suffolk County appointee.

During the months of testimony we heard, many minds were changed. Although no formal vote was taken, a straw poll indicated that only three out of the 15 members favored opening the plant at the conclusion of the hearings, and Marburger was the leader of that pack.

Most of us on the commission had developed serious concerns over the construction, the safety and the impossibility of evacuation. We all feared the financial ramifications of closing the plant, but the majority favored safety over economics.

Marburger, is stepping into very dangerous waters. He has a reactor that is currently closed down and is unsafe. Unlike Shoreham, he has a congressional delegation against nuclear energy. The community is rightly suspicious and the only thing that will ease their fear is open and honest information about the lab, its problems, and how they can be solved in a timely fashion.

The lab is an incredible facility, employing over 3,500 people. It does substantial scientific and medical research and development. Only 10% of the lab is involved with the nuclear reactor. Marburger may have to make the painful decision to cut this portion loose in order to save the rest of the facility.

We will be watching, we will be listening, again. Our safety and health is the question of importance.

And why not?

Better Than Expected

Last year, the Republican majority on the Suffolk County Legislature was badly split on who to choose as a Presiding Officer. County Republican Leader, John Powell favored freshman Legislator Joseph Caracappa. He could not build a consensus among the Republicans. Steve Hackling from Huntington had the other two Republicans from Huntington behind his candidacy. Angie Carpenter from Islip also could not garner the majority support.

The selection of Presiding Officer, as prescribed by law, finally went to the County Clerk, Edward Romaine. After a number of interviews, Romaine selected Legislator Joseph Rizzo from Islip. Rizzo had a reputation of being a bit of a character. He was popular in his district with his constituents and was always easily reelected.

Rizzo had been Deputy Presiding Officer for a number of years. He had the experience and, because of his personality, had worked well with his Republicans colleagues and his Democratic counterparts.

We have been pleasantly surprised that he has turned out to be a better Presiding Officer than we had anticipated and better than most of his predecessors. He has been fair, honest and available. There is no double speak from Rizzo. What's on his mind is on his tongue. He reserves the right to have his own opinions, but respects others who disagree with him.

Under Rizzo's leadership, the Suffolk County Legislature, which has often been categorized as a "funny farm," has become a more productive body. There has been less politics and more consensus, particularly on the big issues like LILCO-LIPA.

We dare say that if Rizzo had not been there, the county would not have conducted a serious study of the deal. The consultants would not have been able to bring the short falls of the proposed deal to the public's attention and we would have been blindly lead into the deal without knowledge or forethought, as has happened in Nassau.

Making government open and honest has not come without a price. The supporters of the deal resented Rizzo's effectiveness and now are looking for another leader. As the old adage, goes, "be sure about what you wish for, you may get it."

Rizzo is a known quantity. He is a conciliator and a producer. He has kept the legislature open and has helped create an honest forum for the various viewpoints. Because of his success, there should be no question about his reelection as Presiding Officer.

The last thing the citizens of Suffolk County need is a repeat of last year's indecision. It would be a good political move for the County Republican Chairman to get behind Rizzo, early and forcefully.

And why not?

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'The Group' Has A Problem

For the first time in several years, "The Group" has a problem. Contributions have been extremely slow this year. We are about \$20,000 behind where we normally are at this time of year.

We had hoped that with the area's improving economy, more people would contribute. Unfortunately for the kids, this is not the case.

Over the past 18 years, "The Group" has provided Christmas for many families who normally are able to take care of their own, but because of adverse circumstances, cannot do so this year. In the past, we have received donations from many Suffolk families and businesses, and the more we receive, the more children we can help bring Christmas delight to.

We have received several new,

very legitimate requests and fear that we will not be able to fulfill them unless there is an immediate response from the public. If you can send a contribution of any size, you will make a difference for these children, who come from average homes with parents who care, but are victims of unavoidable circumstances.

There is only a week left before Christmas and we would hate the idea that there will be a number of children who will be needlessly disappointed when Santa cannot come this year. Not one cent goes to administrative costs, it all goes to the kids.

Please, send your contributions, regardless of the amount, to "The Group," c/o P.O. Box 167, Riverhead, New York 11901.

And why not?

Lazio Comes Through

We recently received a copy of a letter that Congressman Rick Lazio sent to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) requesting that the agency hold public hearings on LIPA's proposed takeover of LILCO. This was welcome news, as the outcome of the proposed LIPA takeover of LILCO will affect every ratepayer on Long Island.

FERC is a federal agency that was created to deregulate utilities across the country. Its objective is to foster competition with the intention of lowering utility rates. LILCO and LIPA are trying to get the proposed LIPA takeover through FERC without public scrutiny.

We believe, as many others do, that the LIPA deal is anti-competition and cannot meet FERC's objective. There are those who say the deal is "wired" from Washington to Albany and that some of our elected officials are comfortable with closing the door to public scrutiny.

Citizens Against LILCO Bailout has requested that Suffolk's congressional delegation call for public hearings by FERC and the IRS on Long Island so that residents and the local media can have exposure and input at these hearings.

Congressman Gary Ackerman immediately honored this request and contacted both the FERC and the IRS. Lazio indicated he was going to do the same, but let it be known through a staff member that he would do nothing until February.

Governor Pataki is looking for a lieutenant governor and Lazio has been mentioned as a possible candi-

date. The name of Pataki's running mate will be announced in February.

We took Lazio to task for procrastinating. Lazio got religion and thankfully made the request. This took a bucket of courage, especially since he is being pressured by Pataki's operatives, including Long Island's daily newspaper.

Newsday, which has done little to publicize the details of the deal, responded with a harsh editorial, criticizing Lazio for his request to FERC. What is *Newsday* afraid of? Its readers and Nassau County residents, who do not receive *Suffolk Life Newspapers*, finding out the details of the deal and being able to make an intelligent decision?

It is the obligation and responsibility of a newspaper, and of public officials, to make sure that readers, voters and constituents have all the facts at their disposal, not just what those in power want them to have.

The FERC hearings are critically important to this process. If the deal cannot stand up to scrutiny in the light of day, it should not be implemented.

We congratulate Rick Lazio for standing up and being counted. Now, how about *Forbes*, or is he so deep in the establishment's pocket that he cannot be counted on to do the right thing?

What about our senators, D'Amato and Moynihan—why are they not calling for the hearings to be held on Long Island? They may be United States senators from New York, but they are Long Island senators, too. Why aren't they representing us?

And why not?



Wouldn't Know The Truth If He Stumbled Over It

That Richie Kessel is something else. He started his career as a consumer watchdog. He fought government at the drop of a hat. He was seldom successful, but he made a name for himself.

Governor Cuomo eliminated him as a critic by making him the head of the Consumer Protection Agency. He made him the salesman for his LILCO takeover plan and finally appointed him to the LIPA board.

Kessel was Governor Pataki's nemesis during the gubernatorial campaign. Pataki was quoted as saying, "the only person that could run LILCO worse would be Richie Kessel." But Assembly Majority Leader Sheldon Silver appointed Kessel to the new LIPA board.

When former LIPA Chairman Zarb resigned, Pataki, to everyone's surprise, appointed Kessel chairman. As chairman of LIPA, Kessel has been an out front advocate of the deal and, we think, doing exactly what he did with Cuomo, all mouth and no substance.

Any alternative suggested to the LIPA deal, Kessel bad mouths it and when he can't bad mouth it, he just plain can't tell the truth.

Before he had even read "The Free Enterprise Plan" by Charles Studness, he condemned it as unworkable. Yet utility economists, who took the time to read and analyze the plan, said it was workable. In fact, a similar plan had already been put in place in California and Massachusetts.

Kessel even blindly attacked the recent revelation of the changes in technology that will allow self-generation. These two new forms of self-generation are micro-turbines for businesses and small units powered by fuel cells for residential buildings.

Kessel claimed that the micro-turbines are less fuel efficient and will pollute the atmosphere substantially. This is just the opposite of everything that

has been written about them. The micro-turbines demonstrated a recovery of 80% more electricity per unit of fuel burned.

Most would be fueled by natural gas rather than heavy oil or coal which are heavy polluters. Because they burn clean, there is less pollution, as most of the components are absorbed into the making of energy.

It is estimated, depending upon the price of fuel, that these micro-turbines will generate electricity at three to six cents per kilowatt hour.

These micro-turbines are not wishful thinking. Prototypes have been built and commercial production is expected to start shortly, with installation before the millennium.

Plug Power from upstate New York, with the backing of two major utilities, has developed the fuel cell technology. It intends to install the units in the homes of their customers without charge.

Units will be no larger than a washing machine and stored in the basement. The electricity generated by these units will be metered and residential customers will pay between six and eight cents per kilowatt hour. The units burn clean and produce almost no pollution.

This new technology will be ready for installation within two years, according to the company. This is the reality of the future and Kessel better come to grips with it, rather than trying to con the public.

The availability of power that costs less than half the cost proposed by LIPA means that LIPA will go belly up and Richie will be without a job.

As the old adage goes, "...you may fool all the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all the time; but you can't fool all of the people all the time." Richie, we are not fools anymore.

And why not?

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Finally! Ratepayer Protection!

The recent announcement that special legislation is being fine-tuned in Albany to produce a Ratepayers' Protection Act to protect Long Island ratepayers from the arrogance of a monopolistic utility and the do-nothing attitude of the state's regulatory agency is the best news we've heard in a long, long time.

For too long, ratepayers have been under the thumb of the Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO), which enjoyed the strong alliance of the state's Public Service Commission (PSC), as an ill-advised nuclear construction project kept costing more and more, causing rates to climb higher and higher.

When construction costs severely drained LILCO's financial resources, bringing it close to bankruptcy, the PSC came to the rescue. Ratepayers were hit with higher rates to cover Construction Work In Progress (CWIP) funding for LILCO to keep the construction going. No other public service commission in the country gave any utility the gift of CWIP funds.

Other PSC's required the plants to be "used and useful" before construction costs were added to the rate base. Ratepayers need protection from cozy PSC-utility relationships.

Ratepayers need protection from politicians who decide to negotiate a deal with LILCO Chairman William Catacosinos because he sucks them in every time. Catacosinos did it to former Governor Mario Cuomo in the 1989 deal, and he is now doing it to Governor George Pataki in the current fiasco known as the LIPA-LILCO deal.

Opponents of the 1989 deal, which closed Shoreham, bitterly complained that the Cuomo deal enriched the stockholders at the expense of the ratepayers. They were right. Rates soared to the highest in the nation. The area's economy was devastated. Businesses left, jobs were lost, financial hardship burdened residents.

The same complaints, with the same possible consequences, loom today. Outside of Pataki, his political henchmen, LILCO and LIPA and a few special interest organizations that stand to benefit, there has been little expressed support for the LIPA-LILCO deal.

Ratepayers need protection because the stakes are very, very high. The motivation is strong. The proponents of the deal stand to benefit greatly. Bankers, lawyers and bonding companies are drooling, waiting for the \$8 billion—which tops out at about \$23 billion including interest—in bonds to be sold.

Those who profit will be grateful, especially with 1998 being an election year on the state level. Ratepayers need protection, not only from LILCO, but also from greedy politicians, because the lure of political contributions will far outweigh common sense or concern for constituents.

In the Cuomo deal, Catacosinos demanded, and got, a \$2.5 billion tax write-off to compensate the loss of the Shoreham plant. In the Pataki deal, LILCO is insisting on a \$2 billion capital gains write-off. And yet, LILCO insists ratepayers still owe \$4.5 billion on Shoreham, and LIPA is willing to force the ratepayers to pay that amount.

What about the write-off? What about the CWIP funds? What about the Shoreham costs that have already been pumped into the rates? How much does all of this add up to? The politicians don't know. The PSC doesn't know. LILCO claims it knows, but we don't know too many people other than the LIPA officials who would believe that figure. The Ratepayers' Protection legislation requires audits to determine the truth.

For these and a host of other reasons, ratepayers definitely need protection. The New York State Legislature has done nothing over the years to protect the ratepayers from the demands of LILCO or the lack of action by the PSC. Now, finally, there are legislators who are willing to stand up on behalf of the ratepayers by taking a hard-nosed stance with the PSC, which has been a partner with LILCO and failed politicians in catering to LILCO at the expense of the ratepayers. We applaud these legislators for their courage and their actions.

There are a number of other politicians, state legislators, who have been involved in a conspiracy of silence on the LIPA-LILCO deal controversy. They are, quite frankly, scared silly of Governor George Pataki, and thus have been silent about the most important issue their constituents have faced in decades.

They have been, according to Jack Kulka, ardent deal opponents who are "hiding in the weeds." Kulka vows "to cut those weeds down" and force the cowardly legislators to take a stand on the issue.

Particular attention will be given to the state senators from this area to encourage them to sponsor the Ratepayers' Protection Act bill in the senate. That list includes senators: Kenneth LaValle (696-6900); James Lack (360-0490); Caesar Trunzo (360-3236); Owen Johnson (669-9200); Carl Marcellino (922-1811); and Norman Levy (546-4100).

If you are a ratepayer, and you're tired of high electric bills and weary of state negotiated deals which make matters even worse, you may be interested in being protected. If so, why not help "cut down the weeds" the majority of Republican state legislators have been hiding in?

Call these senators and tell them it's time to stand up for their constituents, the ratepayers. Help cut down the weeds and leave these legislators exposed to the wrath of ratepayers who are mad as hell and won't take this kind of nonsense anymore.

And why not?



It's Up To You

January is subscription renewal month at *Suffolk Life*. Each year, we request that all our readers fill out the subscription renewal form found on the front page. To be mailed as second-class material, at least 50% of our subscribers must indicate they want the paper mailed to them.

Suffolk Life is mailed free to 518,000 families in Suffolk County. To continue to receive the paper, the only thing you have to do is sign the form and return it to us. If you do appreciate the paper and want us to continue to bring you as much local news as we can, we ask you to include a voluntary subscription fee of \$15. This helps pay for some of the postage and printing. Our postal bill alone is over \$3.5 million per year and we consume just about as much paper.

The quantity of news in *Suffolk Life* is determined by the amount of advertising we carry. Each page of advertising develops a third of a page of news copy. *Suffolk Life* has proven time and time again that we are a valuable asset to the people of Suffolk County.

During this past year, we have brought you extensive, in-depth reporting on the LILCO/LIPA deal and how it will affect you for the next 30 years. The daily newspaper which is in bed with LILCO virtually blacked out this important subject. Most of the weeklies did not offer the kind of coverage we did. The residents of Nassau County are in the dark on this issue as they do not

get *Suffolk Life* in that area.

It is only through your generosity and kind support that we can continue to bring you the coverage on issues of importance like this, keeping you informed and educated so that you can make an intelligent decision on important matters that affect your life.

Suffolk Life is your watchdog, your eyes and your ears. We are not indebted to any special interest or group, just the people of Suffolk County. \$15 is actually a small price to pay for 52 weeks of a quality newspaper delivered by mail right into your home.

As a bonus to our readers who voluntarily pay for their subscription, we offer a free, 15-word classified ad. In addition, to encourage your quick response, we will give a weekend for two to the fabulous Roseland Ranch each week during January. In the middle of February, we will hold a drawing for a grand prize of \$1,000 in cash.

Whether you voluntarily pay for your subscription or not, by filling out the form and sending it back to us you become eligible for the drawings.

We thank everyone who has supported us in the past and those who are considering becoming part of the *Suffolk Life* family this year by voluntarily paying for and renewing their subscription.

Thank you.
And why not?

Not A Repeat

It looks like it's down to the wire. The Suffolk County Legislature is supposed to select its presiding officer by January 1.

In 1997, the legislature was divided and could not come to a conclusion on its own about who the presiding officer was to be. As a result, this duty was given to the County Clerk, Edward Romaine and he chose well.

Joe Rizzo has proven to be an exceptional presiding officer. He has provided strong leadership and has perfected the act of compromise that has brought both sides of the aisle together for the good of the people of Suffolk County.

Unfortunately, there are those who would like to deny him his reelection to this position. Some want to be presiding officer themselves. Others are miffed at the tight ship he has run. Others are willing to trade their vote for special assignments and perks of the office.

Rizzo has been open, communicative and consistently shown a healthy respect for the taxpayers and the residents of Suffolk County. He should continue as presiding officer. This will give the legislature the stability it needs in what promises to be a hectic year.

Rizzo has refused to bow to pressure and has kept the legislature on track in fighting the LILCO/LIPA deal. He is a fiscal conservative and has blocked some of the county executive's runaway spending schemes that would have increased real estate taxes substantially. Rizzo has an excellent team in place that may not go with a new presiding officer. In Rizzo, we know what we have and it's good. Don't fix what's not broken.

On January 1, we hope the legislature has the good sense to rename Rizzo as presiding officer.

And why not?