

Who should pay for the watchdog?

The hearings on LILCO's proposed atomic energy plants have been reopened, but if the opposition is to have a voice, they will have to raise an estimated \$450,000.

LILCO raises the funds to present their case through the electric rates they charge consumers. Those concerned about the impact of atomic reactors on our health, environment, and the quality of our lives have to raise their funds for monitoring and

participating in the hearings through private solicitations.

The first round of hearings lasted almost two years. By pooling their nickels and dimes, holding fundraisers and calling on volunteers to donate thousands of hours, the LILCO hearings were adequately monitored.

Since then, our state legislature has passed a law requiring every applicant for nuclear construction to post \$150,000 to be used by interveners

to present the opposing side. Though the hearings scheduled to begin in March are, in reality, a new set of hearings, LILCO is not being ordered to supply this funding to the interveners.

Without these funds, it is questionable whether the public will receive proper protection or representation. These hearings may become a mockery; a tribute to trial by checkbook. He who has the biggest bank account shall win a favorable verdict. That kind of activity makes a mockery of our justice system.

These hearings not only deal with economics and aesthetics. They deal with our lives.

LILCO has fallen far short of proving their atomic plants are fail-safe. We do not know the environment will not be contaminated. They have presented no safe, sensible plans for removing atomic waste. They have no plans for evacuating you and me in the event the system breaks down. In fact, they deny

liability if an accident should happen and as it currently stands, we have no way of securing reimbursement or compensation for our homes, our belongings or our businesses.

If a serious accident does occur, it is projected the east end of Long Island will be uninhabitable for at least 30 years. Even if we are lucky enough to escape with our lives, there isn't a resident who will not be broken and bankrupted. Yes, the chances of the ultimate accident happening is slim. But it is one factor which must be weighed against the profits LILCO will derive from this generating plant.

The pittance being requested by the interveners is a small price to pay to insure the safest implementation of this extremely dangerous proposition.

If LILCO cared about Long Islanders, you would think they would gladly provide these funds to make sure every base is covered so they could prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, this system is needed, warranted and fail-safe. And why not?

Klein opposes cutting fuel tax

A bill to eliminate the county portion of the sales tax on home heating fuel sponsored by Arthur Kramer has passed the Assembly and is headed for the Senate where last year it met with defeat. This year, its chances of passing are considerably better.

Fuel is something we cannot live without. It falls into the same category as food and medical help and New York State made a mistake when it elected to apply the sales tax to fuel oil.

The state recognized its mistake and last year passed legislation reducing the state's portion of sales tax by one cent this year and one cent next year. Kramer recognized the need for a cut on the county level as well, and initiated the proper legislation. He expected whole hearted support from government officials here on Long Island.

Unfortunately, the Suffolk County Executive John Klein is opposed to the bill. He claims the county cannot afford to give up the revenues it receives from the fuel oil sales tax. Klein wants all of us to continue paying full sales tax on fuel oil.

In the past four years fuel oil prices have doubled and tripled, so has the sales tax. Klein's government has made out like a bandit.

As prices started increasing almost every concerned public official spoke out in favor of either reducing or eliminating sales taxes on fuel. Logically they asked why should the government profit and be rewarded because of inflationary price increases.

Now the measure has passed the Assembly and it looks like the Senate will follow suit, Klein has taken a position contrary to what is good for you, the resident of Suffolk County. Klein doesn't want you to save an estimated \$100 on your annual fuel costs because it means the county will

have to tighten its belt. The county's budget for 1978-79 fiscal year is almost \$750 million.

There once was a time when \$100 meant the difference between a six pack of beer as a reward for five days of toil and surviving with the bare necessities. Gone now, is the six pack of beer. We are talking about the ability to afford the basics of life.

When you are talking on this level, \$100 means an awful lot. It is estimated the reduction in the sales tax will mean an approximate \$7 million to \$8 million loss in county tax revenue. We are sure if Klein was a good executive he would find a way of cutting the county budget by one per cent and still maintain vital services.

We encourage you to personally write Kramer in Albany and support his bill. We also think it might be effective if you reminded John Klein his first obligation is to you and then to the county government. Who knows, he might even pay attention. He is up for re-election this year. And why not?

Readers' Opinion

"Thank you for your attention"

Board of Education
Middle Island Central School District
Middle Island, New York 11953

Ladies & Gentlemen:
The Lion Backers wish to inform the Board of Education that we fully endorse the letter submitted to the Board of Education of the Middle Island Youth Athletic Association. During these times of austerity in our school district, there are reasons for consideration to be given to special interest groups.
The purpose of the schools is to service the

students first and to aid their development into well rounded citizens of the future. It is the hope of the Lion Backers, that if we are fortunate enough to remain on austerity again next year, that special concession be stopped, so, all people will be under the effects of austerity, not just the children, who are deprived of books, activities, buses, etc.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.
Very truly yours,
Richard J. Gallagher
Lion Backers
Middle Island

"We are defenseless under the law"

Dear Mr. Willmott:
In response to your editorial on "Teachers on Strike". If you're going to write a biased editorial, you should at least explain what the Taylor Law is supposed to do and what it doesn't. The law is supposed to provide an atmosphere for negotiations during which time differences are hammered out at the bargaining table. When an impasse is reached, factfinding is sought. Either party may accept or reject the report. In 99 per cent of the cases, teachers have accepted the

report. If the board rejects the report, bargaining is supposed to resume, but the board can refuse because teachers have no recourse! The school board has immunity from the law and any and all action the teacher union may take. This is fair? The board can issue any type, or no contract with impunity. They (board) do not have to go to binding arbitration unless they agree (which they refuse to do). The board cannot be forced to bargain. Where are the teachers' rights under the law? There aren't any so we strike! Why not come up with an alternative Mr. Willmott? Or can't you? We are defenseless under the law.

As to salary, you have your head in the sand. It's funny how people like you only remember the last salary one receives but not the struggle to get there. When I started in 1959 at Morrisville, New York, I earned \$4,000 including coaching and running the audio-visual office. In 1968, after 10 years of teaching, \$10,670. Did that make me upper middle class? It has only been during these last 10 years that strides in salary have been made, but I presume you would prefer I made \$4,000 again. Horrors! That teachers should actually make a decent salary and enjoy creature comforts. Forget that the economy has locked older teachers into Long Island at high salaries, but gives kids an excellent education. We deserve our rights just like everyone else and why not?
Sincerely,
Richard Zuck
Sayville

SUFFOLK LIFE VOL 18 NO. 96
NEWSPAPERS
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Shoreham, Wading River
Westhampton
Moriches
Mastic, Shirley

Three Village
Hauppauge
Ronkonkoma
L.I. Airport
Sayville
Oakdale

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willmotts and why-nots

David J. Willmott, Editor

Is SCAB another SWSD?

County Executive John Klein led the people of the Southwest Sewer District and all the taxpayers of Suffolk County pell mell into a billion dollar pork barrel. By being dishonest, twisting facts, and circumventing the law, he saddled residents with a debt, four times larger than anything they had ever imagined. He has also tied the county sales tax to funding the sewer district for years to come.

Klein now appears to be pulling exactly the same con with the Suffolk County Airport. Klein is rushing feverishly to sign a long term lease with a California based import-exporter. The firm plans to use the airport to export cattle, and, as was recently revealed, to import electronics and possibly clothing. The importer will use huge Boeing 707s.

Klein knows the condition of the runways is perilous at best. For the airport to be fully functional for heavy jet traffic, the runways will have to be redone. It was revealed at a Citizens

Advisory meeting, the cost of the actual construction could exceed \$50 million and with financing charges it could easily pass the \$100 million mark. If the airport is to be fully utilized, the master plan is expected to recommend the creation of a new north-south runway as well.

Because of the length of the runway additional property will have to be condemned and the Riverhead-Westhampton Road changed from its present location to a more westerly one. The cost including financing could well run over one-quarter of a billion dollars.

This would all be fine if there was a need for a major jetport in Suffolk County. Klein and company have never sat back and asked the very basic question: If the County had not inherited the Suffolk County Airport, a military operation, would there be any need or any reason to create a major jetport on Eastern Long Island?

The present airport serves very

little non-military use. It is only being kept opened because it is there and the Air National Guard utilizes the facility for training. Ironically, Klein maintains nothing should be done to the airport until the master plan is finished and there is unanimous agreement that there is a need for an airport. Klein's insistence on signing a lease at this time is totally irrational.

Those of us who have watched Klein's dishonest dealings in the Southwest Sewer District must be cynical, even paranoid about his current rush to sign on the dotted line.

Only now, are we beginning to find

out the extent to which the Southwest Sewer District has been fraught with corruption and political shenanigans. Will the Suffolk County Airport be a replica of the sewer district? It already has all the makings; it's a John Klein project; it has not been presented honestly; there are numerous questions as to whether it is necessary; almost no thought has gone into funding; and it has the same potential for corruption.

This may well be Klein's finale. Whether he is in office in 1980 or not, if he signs the lease now, we may have charted a course that will ruin Suffolk County forever. And why not?

Patty freed at last

Patty Hearst was freed from prison through an executive pardon by President Carter. She was freed from a prison she should have never been in.

If Patty Hearst had been Patty Smith, O'Brien, or Sadowski, she would have been considered a victim, not a participant in the crimes she was charged with. It became very clear after Jonestown, peoples' minds can be controlled by others. Under the proper conditions, they can be convinced to kill their own children without thinking.

No one disputes the fact that Patty

Hearst was held prisoner and locked in a 2 foot by 6 foot closet for seven weeks. There is no question she was subjected to mind-bending drugs and brainwashing techniques, which would have made even the strongest among us succumb.

We hope now that Patty has been freed, she will be able to resume a normal life and not be considered a freak. Rich or poor, famous or unknown, in America we are all supposed to receive the same justice. Carter's pardon was justice, even if it was delayed. And why not?

"It was very common"

Dear Editor

I am not able to explain the mystery of the McAlevey leaf, but when I attended St. Augustine's School in 1938-1941 in the Bronx, New York (Fulton Avenue), two of the teachers, Brother Austin and Brother Justine, members of the DeLaSalle Christian Brothers, rewarded good students by transferring holy pictures onto leaves.

The student so awarded would bring in a fresh leaf and a 'holy picture' and the next

day the Brother would return the picture and the leaf to them, only now the leaf bore the perfect replica of the holy picture.

The fact that Bishop Ryan never saw a leaf etching is understandable, but to the students of old St. Augustine's in the Bronx it was very common.

Very truly yours,
Frank A. Crystal
Rocky Point

"The grievance was denied . . ."

Dear Editor:

I recently filed a tax grievance with the Town of Brookhaven Board of Assessment Review, because our home is presently taxed at a rate which exceeds its market value by at least ten thousand dollars.

The grievance was denied, with absolutely no reason given. I certainly would like to know how, and on what basis, the board came to their decision.

As an agency of local government, representing the people, it would seem only logical, not to mention courteous, to offer a reason as to why a petition is not granted. This, however, is not the case. I contacted State Senator LaValle's office and was told that the Assessment Review Board is a completely autonomous group, evidently having dictatorial power, and is required to explain their decisions to no one.

It seems to me that with this kind of attitude, the tax board is actually gaining supporters for "Proposition 13" type tax cuts.

I would like to see legislation enacted which would require the Board to be accountable to the people it is supposed to serve.

Sincerely,
Larry Blank
Lake Ronkonkoma

Readers' Opinion

"It will encourage family planning"

Dear Mr. Willmott:

Regarding School Taxes, and all other associated costs. I think that, instead of a property tax, we should have a user's, or child's tax. Assess each household, by the number of school children, under its roof. Then I assure you, the costs of schools, and all their inflated and unnecessary expense, will soon be held to a minimum.

At the same time, it will encourage family planning, which is sorely needed. For our rampant population explosion is taxing our planet's ability to maintain the pest called "Mankind."

The appointment of 22 new teachers to the Middle Island Schools, the demand for the passage of the school Bond Issue, by Mr.

Marvin Roecklein, all indicate a mushrooming of taxes to the heights of Mt. Everest.

Self-reliance, independence, made this country. What concerns you and your family should be paid for by you, and not your neighbor.

Sports, and other non-related educational pursuits, should definitely be borne by the family. Plenty of time and energy, to toss a football, play basketball, also indicates time to walk and energy to spare for that walk to school.

This maudlin concern for the young stalwart's, in an ever sickening, permissive society, galls me. It's about time family takes care of its own and young are taught better values.

As for the RCA property taken off the tax rolls and converted to a reserve, that is more to be desired than having the land speculators and builders destroying what is fast becoming a scarcity, and pure environment and habitat of many animals. If developed, and settled by families, our taxes will become astronomical. Now all we need is to have some idiot of a politician issue a contract to political leeches, to erect a cyclone fence around the property, as done on William Floyd Pkwy. and Whiskey Rd. To gut out a path all around the property for the trucks and men and erect this barrier at great cost serves no purpose other than to line the pockets of club house cronies. This is blatant porkbarreling. The politicians have to be denied funds for these projects. Less taxes, less monies, for them to liberally toss around.


Sincerely,
Peter D. Kusznr
Ridge

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Mastic	Moriches	Sayville
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Rate Payers should not be forced Investors

LILCO rate payers are captive customers and, through a quirk in the law, forced investors in this gigantic privately owned monopoly.

Normally in the capitalist system, private individuals invest their money in a company with the hope of realizing a profit from the sale of the product or service developed by the company.

LILCO began this way. A group of investors saw a future in manufacturing and transmitting electricity to homes, pooled their capital and formed the corporation. In addition to using their own money, they sold bonds which carried attractive interest rates to help fund the needed capital expansion of the company.

Somewhere along the line, the law was changed and LILCO was allowed to tap a new source of money for capital investments. Instead of selling stocks and bonds and having to pay interest to investors, they were permitted to use the money we the consumers are forced to pay them.

It was recently revealed Fred Carr, system planner for the State Public Service Commission recommended LILCO hold off on any further construction of nuclear energy plants until the early to mid 1990's when the

need may be there. It was also disclosed that at the current rates, all users of the utility are funding the construction of these multi-billion dollar plants.

Why should purchasers of electricity be forced to enhance the value of LILCO as a corporation through the development of facilities? Users of LILCO are not normal investors. They do not own any part of the company. They receive no dividends and share in no profits.

There isn't a business around that would not like to have this deal. Can you imagine the glee in the board room of General Motors, General Electric or even mom and pop businesses if they did not have to fund their own capital programs? Of course, they can't force their customers to invest in their company without giving them anything in return. They operate within the rules of the free enterprise system where competition determines the rates they may charge.

LILCO does not have any competition. We are all forced, because of our dependence upon electricity, to buy from them. The only regulation LILCO has to deal with comes from the Public Service Commission and

even their hands are tied. The Governor appoints the members of the PSC and the State Legislature makes the rules and regulations under which PSC operates.

The rules governing the PSC need revamping badly. The provisions allow utilities to pass the cost of capital construction on to the consumer. This must be eliminated. If a utility wishes to expand its facilities the funds should come from either investors or the sale of bonds. Investors profit through the sale of electricity, they should not also profit by having its investors enriched through the gouging of the consumer.

In addition, the Public Service Commission's rules should be revamped to make it profitable for the utility to develop and market free sources of energy. Under the current system, the utilities are penalized for developing cheaper sources of energy.

The current rate structure is based on a system encouraging the utility to spend the maximum amount of money it can on generating elec-

tricity. The percentage of profit a utility receives is set by law. They are given a minimum and a maximum. The more they spend the more money they make. If LILCO could suddenly develop a free source of energy their profits would be forced to plummet. Is this the reason LILCO has shunned the utilization of wind power, tides or hydroelectric generating facilities and has opted for the costly and potentially devastating atomic generation of electricity?

The cost of electricity has been a contributing factor in the decline of the economic base here in the eastern portion of the metropolitan area. It is a major reason why most of us have difficulty making ends meet.

Governor Carey and the State Legislature should be addressing these problems. It's now so immense that it can't be solved. Changes in the regulations would go a long way in reducing the cost of surviving and speed the redevelopment of a better quality of life for everyone. And why not?

Things are looking up

I really get aggravated when I pick up the newspapers and read of more talk about recession and turn on the television and hear more of the same. For over two years now, we all have been subjected to a continual barrage of negativism. If half of what is being said were true, the country would be in the depths of a depression that would have made the '30's look like kindergarten.

Instead, businesses have gone along pretty much as normal. Sure its been tough and probably the toughest thing is countering the down feeling that

prevails throughout the region and the country.

Currently our employment is up, business over-all is moderate to good, and people and businesses are spending and expanding. Sure it's not like the boom of the '60's, but it sure as hell isn't depression days either.

If each of us is a little bit more optimistic or, heaven forbid, enthusiastic, we could turn our own normal economy and everyday life into something super. Let's try it. We all could gain from it. And why not?

Readers' Opinion

"Braking" in new drivers

Dear Mr. Willmott:

"Braking" in new drivers by Andrea Berry was the most timely article in years. I must commend Mr. David Williams for his true story on unnecessary accidents, especially the teenagers. As soon as they get their licenses, immediately they get in their minds that the right of way is theirs regardless.

In 53 years of my driving, I saw so many accidents that could have been prevented if the drivers, not only teenagers, but the drivers in general, should get into their minds that safe driving is to rely on the brakes, not on a horn. I understand that sometimes stepping on the brake will not help, especially drunken drivers or mechanical failures.

In 53 years, I have driven over half a million miles. All these years I managed to keep my record clear. On August 31st, I was crossing the most dangerous intersection in Mastic Beach, the Commack Rd. crossing the Neighborhood Rd. A woman ran into my car, demolished it completely, broke a bone in my right hand and my shoulder. If she only touched her brakes instead of stepping on the gas, I would be out of the way. A policeman came on the scene about 5 minutes later. He accused me of being guilty. I said how in the world can I be guilty when I only needed 2 feet to get out of the way. If she had stayed on her lane, she would have prevented the accident.

Here is my forewarning that the mentality of the right of way is not changed. Many of us will suffer. I can show anyone

that there are, in Mastic Beach alone, at least 30 stop signs that are useless to a driver.

The driver sits almost in the center of his car, the roads are only about 12 feet wide, he stops at the stop sign and has no vision at all. He proceeds to his vision he has to be in the center of the road, to and behold any of the right of way drivers can run into him. According to the police and some lawyers, the victim is immediately guilty because he has a stop sign. The right of way can sue the victim for anything he pleases and he hires a lawyer with snap of finger and the real victim who stopped on the stop sign is pronounced guilty without judge or jury. I told one lawyer that the woman was going 40 mph in a 30 mph zone. The lawyer said I quote, "Even if you stop at the sign and she was going 80 mph, you are still guilty."

That I refuse to accept even if I have to go to the Supreme Court. No one should be guilty without proven guilty.

I appeal to the drivers who had a similar problem. Please write to Suffolk Life. Maybe we can get rid of this unjust law.

In the Robert's Rule Book, it states "A law that has no substance is no law" and this law you are guilty because you have a stop sign, certainly has no substance.

Dear Editor, please print this letter. It may even help you sometime in the future.

Peter Shaynak
Shirley.

"Free cheese in the mousetrap"

Dear Mr. Willmott:

The saying that there is always free cheese in the mousetrap could very well relate to the situation that is facing Southampton Town at present. The free cheese is the Supposed Federal Share of projects we have contracted for, and now whose funding is doubtful.

The trap will be sprung when all these grandiose ideas and projects will have to be funded by the taxpayers in Southampton. With billboard blight so evident in all sections of Long Island, the most unfortunate sign is the one that says For Sale, and in Southampton Town the sign is very much in evidence. The answer is as evident in the next elbow you rub in the supermarket, or in the eyes of a senior citizen who has to save to go to the doctor, or the young family whose extra jobs keep their heads above fiscal drowning.

Costs and expenses not controlled will only

lead to more For Sale Signs. Governments say, and Southampton officials state we have nothing to do with rising costs, As they build a new softball field in Hampton Bays at a cost of Fifty Thousand Plus Dollars, a New Town Hall whose funding is now dubious, and a One Million Dollar Police Station that funded by the Federal Government faces the wrong way.

The For Sale signs will only come down when the people and taxpayers in Southampton see some glimmer of fiscal sanity on the part of our elected officials, county state and local. I don't have all the answers, but can our elected officials come up with some, before we see For Sale on the new Town Hall.

Sincerely,
James P. Drew
Southampton Town
Conservative Party

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Passing the school budget

This coming Spring, school districts will present their budgets for voter approval. With a growing number of people complaining they can't afford additional taxes, many of these budgets will go down in defeat.

In response to this trend, groups are forming in districts presently operating under austerity to get the next budgets passed and restore the niceties that were wiped out by austerity.

A few facts should be considered by those who blindly support the passage of budgets without knowing their costs. New York State schools operate at twice the cost of average schools in the nation and Long Island schools have the highest cost ratio in the State. The state-wide average for educating a student in a public school is \$1950. The state-wide average for educating a student in a parochial school is under \$1,000. Parochial

schools today are manned predominately by lay teachers. Gone are the days when nuns and brothers donated their teaching services.

The cost of educating a student here on Long Island is as high as \$3331.-the figure used in the Shoreham-Wading River district.

Shoreham-Wading River can afford to spend this much on its students because of the huge tax revenues they receive from the Shoreham nuclear generating plant. Even the Riverhead school district which lies adjacent to Shoreham-Wading River and does not benefit from a large commercial tax base spends \$2315, to educate each student, 25 per cent more than the State average.

As a first goal in passing a budget, all school boards on Long Island must recognize the fact that the cost of education here exceeds the statewide norm and is more than double the

national norm. The quality of education in New York is not twice as good as the rest of the nation. The cost of educating each student, as a first step, must be put in parity with the rest of the State. This can be done through increasing class sizes and eliminating subjects not necessary for a good basic education. They must also trim administrator costs, and in negotiations with teachers, the nation and state-wide norm for salaries must be used as a bargaining point by the school boards.

The State must eliminate tenure provisions. Teachers who can't function as well as they did in the past must be mustered out. Openings must be made for younger, new teachers who neither command or demand salaries taxpayers can't afford. Fringe benefits for educators must be reduced to the average level received by those in private industry. Without these and other cost saving measures, more and more budgets will be defeated and austerity will become a way of life.

Austerity itself is a misnomer. As mandated by the State, it covers only the basic R's, contrary to what the public believes, school boards have

great latitude in determining the major portion of their budget. They elect to add a whole host of subjects ranging from frivolous to serious.

Which electives are implemented is determined by the school board and by pressure brought by parents of students who want their child to have a so-called full education. Some courses in schools have as few as six students. Other advanced courses may have only a dozen pupils. The cost is basically the same for teaching six students as it is for teaching 30.

We are at a point where we can't afford the luxury of teaching small groups of students. Those exceptional students who seek the advanced courses will be better served if they attend a regional or county high school where they could be grouped with their peers who are overachievers.

Education and its spiralling cost cannot continue as it has in the past. There just isn't enough money to fund it. School boards and those who support the passage of budgets must offer voters budgets that are reduced and reflect a per student cost well within the state average or face defeat. And why not?

And they teach Democracy?

Resolution

Whereas, the editorials of the Suffolk Life newspaper have consistently attacked teachers, teacher unions and public employees, and

Whereas, David Willmott, publisher of the newspaper, has repeatedly published misinformation and distorted facts, and

Whereas, the Suffolk Life newspaper has a large circulation in Suffolk County, and

Whereas, our membership is primarily from Suffolk County, Be it resolved that,

The teacher organizations in Election District No. 22 urge their membership to try not to patronize all the businesses who advertise in the Suffolk Life newspaper.

The teacher organizations in Election District No. 22 urge their membership not to place classified ads in the Suffolk Life newspaper.

The membership of the Eastport Teachers Association voted to support this resolution at its monthly meeting on November 29.

Example is the greatest teacher in the world. It is more effective than words, print or visual communication.

One of the courses taught to all students is Social Studies, a subject which includes a study of our system of government. It is called a democracy.

The foundation of this system of government is the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The founders of this country were very astute men who

labored long to make provisions guaranteeing everyone freedom of speech. Presumably, they did this so all sides of all issues could be discussed, and no single force or group of people could gain control of the government or the economy.

As you can see, by the resolution printed above, reprinted from a circular distributed throughout Suffolk County by the Eastport Teachers Association, some teachers do not like to practice what they teach. They want to be able to express their opinions but are resentful of others who do the same. They are attempting to organize an economic boycott of Suffolk Life for having spoken out about the cost of education.

Over the past several months, they have taken advantage of our policy of allowing rebuttals to our editorials in our letters to the editor section. Having been unable to convince the public they are underpaid and overworked, they are now attempting to stifle the one newspaper that has the courage to stand up and question their insatiable appetite for the taxpayers' money.

We regret the teachers movement finds it necessary to resort to this distasteful practice; it shows their students they only believe in the Constitution when it protects them.

We ask you, if you find this practice as upsetting as we do, to mention to all the businesses you do business with here in Suffolk County that you read Suffolk Life, and plan to continue doing business with people who advertise in the newspaper that has the courage to speak out on your behalf. And why not?

Readers' Opinion

"They are the only ones who have problems"

Dear Editor:

It has become a known fact that there are many people concerned about the senior citizen always, voting against the school budget.

Therefore, I recommend that the senior citizen not be allowed to vote on the school budget. Since they have no children going to school.

It is also a known fact that there are many people against subsidized housing, (Bills 232, 235, 236), Subsidized rents (Section 8, maximum rent subsidy \$705.00 per month).

Included are special business tax abatements with low cost loans available.

Therefore, I recommend that only the people who have subsidized homes, subsidized rents, and businessmen with special tax abatements, with low income loans, be the only one's allowed to vote in any and all elections since they are the only one's who have problems.

Sincerely,
Joseph Durinick
Shirley

"Thank you and the members of the staff"

Dear Mr. Schumacher:

Thank you and the members of your staff for the cooperation and courtesy shown to our auditor, Mr. Frank Nizer, during the School Bus Safety Audit. It is evident that the safety and welfare of every student receives the highest consideration.

It is a pleasure to inform you that the records were found to be in excellent order. Your district is to be recommended for the thoroughness and efficiency shown in complying with Section 156.3 of the Rules and

Regulations of the Commissioner of Education and other statutory requirements pertaining to pupil transportation.

Your outstanding efforts in the field of School Bus Safety are to be congratulated. If this Bureau may be of any assistance, please contact us at (518) 474-4738.

Sincerely,
Charles T. Button, Chief
Bureau of Special Educational
Management Services

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Bridgehampton, Sag Harbor
Southampton, Hampton Bay
Southold, Greenport
Mattituck
Riverhead

Rocky Point
Port Jefferson
Shoreham, Wading River
Westhampton
Moriches
Mastic, Shirley

Three Village
Hauppauge
Ronkonkoma
L.I. Airport
Sayville
Oakdale

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willmotts and why-nots

David J. Willmott, Editor

Last may not be best offer

In an effort to solve the dilemma caused by negotiations between governments and public employees, a solution known as "Last Best Offer" has surfaced.

Basically, "Last Best Offer" calls on an arbitrator to take into account the last best offer made by the

government and the last best offer made by the public employees and come up with a settlement he feels is just.

"Last best offer" guarantees there will be an increase in cost to the taxpayers.

Negotiations between public em-

ployees and the government are difficult because of two factors; Public employees are restricted from legally striking or using other effective labor tools, and the government, dealing with the tax revenues raised from the citizenry, is charged by law and by pure politics to be prudent with its expenditures.

Arbitration would seem to make excellent sense except for the recent experiences we have had here on Long Island. Through pooling their union dues, public employees have been able to hire the very best legal talent to represent them in their negotiations. Governmental agencies have not been able to afford this luxury and all too often have settled for less competent legal aide.

The situation is further complicated because the arbitrator is not mandated by law to take into account the people's ability to fund the settlement

he orders. This element of non-accountability is the biggest weakness in the "last best offer" idea.

We have here in New York State so-called caps on the amount of the fair market property value that may be taxed. After years of circumvention and abuse, these laws have become meaningless and are exceeded in almost every community. We fear the "last best offer" will turn into a taxpayers nightmare unless the State mandates a formula of maximum taxation and the arbitrators are forced to make settlements whose total costs do not exceed this cap on taxation.

Without these safeguards we will be right back where we were with binding arbitration. There just isn't room in the average person's budget to afford more tax increases to fund these outlandish settlements. And why not?

Readers' Opinion

Be straight with your readers

Dear Mr. Willmott:

The integrity of your readers makes it essential that I respond to your editorial of January 10, 1979, entitled "Warning to taxpayers". As I have in the past, I will continue to ignore the 90 percent of the editorial consisting of your personal slander of me and deal with the remaining 10 percent which holds itself out to be a description of what I have proposed to the County Legislature.

I have delivered three local laws to the County Legislature. The first provides for a preamble to the County Charter which calls for a reduction over the next five years of all property taxes in the County from the current level of 4 per cent of full value to 1 percent.

That proposition is not binding upon the taxing authorities because only a New York State Constitutional Convention can bring about such a binding referendum. It can, however, give the people of this County the opportunity to speak in a strong, loud voice to all public officials at all levels of government to demand an end to the highest per capita property tax in the United States.

The second local law and the second vote would provide for a 25 percent reduction in the County general property tax rate over five years, at the rate of 5 percent per year. That requirement would be binding, unless overridden by a vote of 80 percent of the County Legislature in any given year.

The third local law requires that the tax rate for the County police district (the five western towns) be capped for future years at the 1979 level, unless overridden by a vote of 80 percent of the County Legislature.

I want every Suffolk County voter to have an opportunity to vote on each of those propositions in June so that the 1980 County Budget can be prepared in conformity with the vote on Propositions 2 and 3, and so that every Suffolk voter can have the right of expression through Proposition 1 on all property taxes and thereby get a message, not only to the County government, but to the school districts and all others who impact their lives through property taxes so directly...

The editorial states that my proposed referendum is a "phony" and a "ploy" and that there "will be a binding referendum." That, of course, is categorically untrue, since no such referendum can be held in Suffolk County covering all property taxes until and unless there is an amendment to the New York State Constitution which, under the terms of the Constitution, could not become effective prior to January 1, 1982. It is sad that you would make such a false statement

to people who rely upon the integrity of the news media for public information.

As to the statement in the editorial that spending between \$100,000 to \$250,000 on such a referendum would be meaningless, your readers should know that if such a referendum were held and Propositions 2 and 3 were approved, the impact of reduction of County expenditures in 1980 could be as much as \$15,000,000 - not a bad return for a \$200,000 investment.

In conclusion, I say to you - lay on with the libel and slander, but at least be straight with your readers. And why not?

Very truly yours,
John V.N. Klein

Suffolk County Executive

EDITORS NOTE:

Dear Mr. Klein:

I will stand by my editorial "Warning To Taxpayers" 100 percent. Your calling for a vote on a non-binding petition in an election year is pure, political hogwash.

By your own admission, this first proposition is not binding upon the taxing authorities because only a "New York State Constitutional Convention can bring about such a binding referendum." You know this, I know this and the people of Suffolk County should know it. This was the purpose of the editorial.

I believe your ploy to hold a non-binding referendum is designed to do nothing more than confuse the voters into thinking they are

taking real, positive action, and to make you look like a hero in an election year. In reality they would be doing nothing more than wasting their time and effort because by law, the vote is meaningless. I must take my hat off to you, though, you've got chutzpah and are a master of deception.

Your second local law providing for a 25 percent reduction in the County general property tax rate over five years at the rate of 5 percent per year, again is meaningless hogwash. For it to be binding it would have to be preceded by a change in the Suffolk County Charter. Under the present law a simple majority of the Legislature determines the fate of a budget. You know this, I know this and hopefully the public will realize the truth by reading.

Your third local law requiring the County tax rate for the County Police District be capped for future years at the 1979 level, unless overridden by a vote of 80 percent of the County Legislature, again is not possible unless you have a charter revision that is

voted on and passed by the residents of Suffolk County. This idea is particularly fraught with danger because it does not allow the police department to keep pace with population growth.

Fourth, and most important, is the plain, hard fact that you, and you alone, as preparer of the budget could have created a 5 percent, 10 percent or 25 percent tax reduction during the years you have been in office by presenting to the Legislature fiscally sound budgets designed to reduce taxes. As County Executive, you alone must accept the responsibility for the cost of government in Suffolk County. You are the boss and the buck stops at your desk.

Your gimmick was a nice try and it might have worked had Suffolk Life and other newspapers rolled over and played dead. Maybe if Suffolk Life and the other newspapers in Suffolk County had been better watchdogs in the past some of the scandalous waste of taxpayers money would have been avoided.

Are we not all responsible?

Dear Mr. Willmott:

You have written several editorials regarding public schools and public employees. I wonder if your readers are aware of some important points other than those that you have mentioned?

Agreed that there is a need to cut out waste, and that funding of education must be changed. However, is it fair, or even accurate, to place the entire burden of responsibility for the current situation on the schools and/or the teachers? Are we not all responsible for the world we live in and the conditions that exist therein?

It is easy to take things out of context, or to deal with them from only one perspective, but there is a larger picture than just schools or teachers. There isn't anything that we do that won't directly or indirectly affect each

other, whether it be a raise that one person receives, or a price increase caused by that raise. Ultimately we all pay for each other. For years there has been a growing citizen attitude critical of public employees. There have also been subsequent organized "movements" directed against public employees. Some of the criticism has been deserved, some undeserved, and some has been entirely unfounded. Regardless of the pros and cons, I would like you to consider the following:

1. Public awareness has been focused on a narrow portion of the entire picture of inflation, school districts, and teacher salaries. What about the other factors?
2. Public confidence in all public employees has been steadily eroding, but is this justifiable? Are public employees solely responsible for our predicament as taxpayers in New York State or in the Nation?
3. The morale of public employees has been steadily eroding.
4. One sector of society has become the scapegoat for what an entire society has wrought.

Perhaps you are trying to change our society for the better, but should it be done at the expense of one particular portion of that society? Isn't it possible that you have been too simplistic in your approach to solving the problems of inflation and taxes? Perhaps you can enlighten the entire populace as to what their part in the overall picture of taxes and inflation really is! Finally, you might look more closely at what benefits could be derived from praising those who do work very hard and thanklessly at their jobs.

Sincerely,
Richard Uckmann

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VOL 18 NO. 100

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