

# We Seldom Appreciate What We Have Till It's Gone

The truth of this statement, we fear, will come full circle during the next few years as we find out how much three men who have left public office meant to us. The men are Michael LoGrande, acting county executive of Suffolk; Martin Lang, supervisor of the Town of Southampton; and Victor Prusinowski, councilman of the Town of Riverhead.

In our 27 years of reporting about government, Michael LoGrande was one of the few public servants we could rate as outstanding. From an intelligence standpoint, Mike was at the top of the class. His mind was trained as a planner. A planner sees the future based on the mistakes of the past. Mike was keenly aware of what happened in Suffolk, what was wrong with it and what needed to be done to fix it.

As acting county executive facing a November election, his hands were tied by the politics and politicians of the situation. He did what he could as acting county executive, but bubbled over with enthusiasm for what he anticipated accomplishing once he had the politics behind him.

We really felt that Suffolk County would have been a better county because of him. As a professional and a gentleman, he would have rid us once and for all of the politics of the wild west which had surrounded the office and tarnished its image.

He was acutely aware of who the bad guys were and planned to get rid of them. His visions of the quality of life that Suffolk could achieve were based upon reality and fact. He was a workaholic who thrived on the challenge and thrilled at the accomplishments. He loved people and his main desire was to serve them.

Mike's problem was that he was not a politician. His lack of political expertise did him in and we lost what might have been the greatest county executive Suffolk ever had.

Martin Lang became supervisor at Southampton's crossroads.

Southampton was facing a tremendous explosion with little planning and lack of forethought. The town had been victimized by years of political neglect. Services were not up to par, yet, a chosen few, year after year, continued to be enriched, for they controlled everything.

Lang was a maverick, not part of the game plan. He had grassroots appeal based upon modern ideas, enthusiasm and a zest to make Southampton Town a town for all Southampton residents.

During his first successful run, he outlined a host of programs he wished to implement. They ranged from road, beach and recreational advancements and improvements to an upgrading of the police force, town hall, development of senior housing, nutrition programs and recreational opportunities for all people. One look at his record, and it's plain to see that he accomplished everything he set out to do, and much more.

Lang took immediate control of Southampton. He became the sole force to be reckoned with. Nothing was going to get in the way of his determination. Sure, he steamrolled others, particularly lackluster councilmen. He forced employees to work, to be productive. But at the same time, he increased town and police salaries and benefits which attracted even better people for the people of Southampton to employ. He guided Southampton through a turbulent growth which was marked with

harmony between second homeowners and year-rounders. He favored fairness, not one side or the other.

During this period of growth and expansion of government, taxes remained low, in fact, the lowest of any major town in Suffolk. It was the taxes, though, that was the sin that hung Lang. The town was ordered by the state to reassess the value of land so that all land values were equalized.

Lang had two choices, he could issue bonds to the tune of about \$4 million which would have to be paid for by the taxpayers over a number of years and accomplish the reassessment in a single year's period of time. The second option he had, which he decided in favor of, was to save the taxpayers the \$4 million in bonded indebtedness and have the reassessment done in a three-stage process over a three-year period of time by town employees. In the end, the result was the same, the value of all land would be equalized and all would be paying their fair share of taxes. The difference is, taxpayers were saved 4 million dollars of tax liability.

His opponent, although agreeing with the state's mandate, seized upon the issue and convinced those whose land was first being assessed that Lang had done them wrong. Those whose land had not been reassessed heard rumors and fear stories of huge increases in assessments, and foolishly felt that a vote against Lang would protect

them from the unknown. Lang lost. He took his defeat as a man, for he knew he had tried as hard as he could and had the accomplishments to prove it. Southampton is a better town because of Martin Lang.

Victor Prusinowski spent eight years as councilman of the Town of Riverhead. Being young, ambitious and enthusiastic, he was able to juggle a full-time career here at Suffolk Life with that of being a councilman. His input as councilman was marked by his common sense and his appreciation for the town as only a native could. He grew and learned on the job and rapidly became known as the sensible one of the councilmen.

On election night we had mixed feelings. Our town had lost the services of a dedicated public servant. We had regained the full-time service of an employee, but more important, Victor had gained a life of his own and eliminated tremendous stress.

The candidates who were victorious are good people. Time will tell whether they will be able to match the people that they defeated. One thing is for sure: these three individuals, each in their own way, have left behind big shoes for anyone to try to fill.

To the three, we say our heartfelt thanks for exemplifying the term 'public servant.' To the victors, we say God speed. May you be half the person you are replacing.

And why not?

## Bravo, John Behan!

New York State Assemblyman John Behan got a phone call the other day from the vice president of the United States. Vice President George Bush wanted Behan to serve as a delegate at the National Republican Convention, where the Republican candidate for president will be selected. Bush wanted Behan to support his efforts to be that candidate. But Behan told the vice president the issue of Shoreham, an issue that Bush has managed to duck up until now, had to be aired first.

Behan told the vice president that he could not offer his support until and unless the vice president took a stand on Shoreham. Bravo! John Behan has shown the kind of political courage we have been hoping would be applied to the federal level. Bush is stumping around looking for support here in Suffolk County, but is sidestepping the most important issue we face, an unwanted, unneeded, and unsafe nuclear plant in an area that cannot be safely evacu-

ated. Is that the kind of leadership we want? The kind of concern for the people we deserve?

The Shoreham issue ended the political career of one incumbent congressman, William Carney, a firm supporter of the plant and LILCO. The Republican candidate seeking to replace Carney, County Legislator Gregory Blass, ran into trouble when he did not take a firm stand on Shoreham during a campaign visit to Suffolk by Vice President Bush. Blass was strongly criticized for not publicly telling Bush of the Shoreham concerns of a vast majority of Suffolk residents. Blass said he told Bush of those concerns during the car ride from the airport. Supposedly, a meeting was to be arranged between Bush and leading Shoreham opponents to discuss the matter further, but no meeting has ever been held. Many feel that the lack of firm action on this matter during the Bush visit was a contribut-

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**NEWS AND PHOTOGRAPHS** - Readers are welcome to submit ideas of interest and photographs for consideration of publication. All news and photographs become the property of Suffolk Life upon submittal and cannot be returned for any reason.

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## Bravo...

Cont. from page 3

ing factor in the Blass defeat.

Behan's stand, therefore, is a breath of fresh air in a climate of stifling political expediency. Behan's stand, hopefully, will show the way for the Suffolk Republican party to exact a promise from Bush for federal fairness, and an end to the runaway, change the rules to benefit LILCO and Shoreham mentality of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, a regulatory agency strongly tied to the nuclear industry.

The Suffolk Republican Party is in a shambles. It has lost the county executive position, the congressional seat once held by Carney, and a host of supervisor posts throughout the county. In a recent letter to GOP committeemen, County Republican Leader Mike Blake noted: "We are entering an uncharted time for the Suffolk GOP. A time that will call for significant changes in our political attitudes and structure. A time when a much broader view of the future is necessary to bring us back into the political mainstream of our county." To that we would add: the time to make decisions based on the views of the rank and file, not just the political ambitions of political leaders.

Blake can start in that direction by joining Behan in putting Bush to the test on Shoreham. Blake has already come out in support of the vice president. Not because the vice

president has promised he will oppose the corrupt actions of the NRC--which he should do--or that he will stand firm on the issue of safety for the public. Our guess is that Blake has tied his star to the Bush campaign in hopes of future political gain for himself.

It's time the Suffolk Republican Party joins in fighting for the future of Suffolk County, a future safe from the threat of a nuclear disaster at Shoreham. The time to do that is now, when Bush wants the support of Suffolk voters. The thing to tell Bush now is that he will not get our support until we get his support on Shoreham.

Blake has promised to assemble a "Blue Ribbon Committee of elected officials, leaders and members of the county committee" to chart a new course for the party. Where is the input from the rank and file? The people who really count. Without the rank and file, there is no party.

If you are Republican, and you are concerned about Shoreham and the future of your family, you ought to let Blake know how you feel. He apparently has taken you for granted. You ought to let him know, in no uncertain terms, that your views are important, and should be considered. That the very future of the Republican Party in Suffolk County depends on it.

And why not?

## New York Invades Suffolk

Years ago, Suffolk Republicans used to bring out, during every election year, tired old campaign literature stating that if you vote Democratic, you are voting for an invasion of Suffolk by New York City. The Republicans asked the pointed question, "Do you want the New York City Democratic bosses running Suffolk County?"

Patrick Halpin, a Democrat, was elected county executive and he appears to be fulfilling every fear the Suffolk Republicans had. A look at his top aides reveals that Halpin feels there aren't any qualified Suffolk Democrats capable of helping him run the county.

folk Democrats capable of helping him run the county.

The addresses of his chief staff read from Albany to New York City. What's wrong with Suffolk? Are there no qualified Democrats in Suffolk? If Halpin had intended to bring in the quantity of outsiders he is bringing in, shouldn't he have disclosed this during his campaign?

Do we, as Suffolk residents, really want a vanguard of New York City politicians running our county? Is New York City run the way we want our county to be?

And why not?

## Getting Off Center

Although we have harbored high hopes which did not materialize in past years, 1988 should definitely be the year we get off dead center on Shoreham.

LILCO has just about exhausted every trick in the book to get the ill-fated power plant licensed. L.I.P.A., the Long Island Power Authority, has exhausted just about every excuse for procrastination. If the Governor's agenda calls for him to be a serious candidate for president, he has exhausted every opportunity to play Solomon.

The facts are clear cut, the

Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant should not be licensed, as we can't insure the safety of Suffolk residents in case of an accident.

Long Island's needs for power are increasing, but can be met over the short haul through importation of additional power and achievable conservation efforts.

The ratepayers on Long Island have already paid 40 percent of the cost of the plant. The shareholders have benefited through tax shelters and cash dividends over the construction period of the plant.

Bondholders have reaped huge and

unnatural dividends that were coupled by the risk they were taking.

A stalemate exists because no one is willing to talk. Egos are in the way while millions are lost daily.

L.I.P.A. is empowered to take over LILCO through a stock acquisition or a condemnation of assets. Stock currently is selling at around \$7, an advantageous price for a take over. Stock would be worthless if the company goes bankrupt, which it could if it can't get further rate

increases.

The Public Service Commission has stated it will grant no further rate increases to further the Shoreham aims. We would assume this includes all the costs of licensing, including legal battles that LILCO has been waging.

The time for action is now and not tomorrow. The point is clear. Take over LILCO by Stock Tender or condemnation.

And why not?

## Letters to the Editor

### "Hold our president to his word"

Dear Sir:

I am writing to your publication in the hope that the following letter can be printed.

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan stated that the accountability of all POW's and MIA's from the Vietnam War is "the highest national priority." Now it is late 1987 and there are still over 2,400 men and women listed as POW's and MIA's in Southeast Asia. Over the years, since the Vietnam war, there have been hundreds of "live sighting reports" turned over to the U.S. Government.

I think it is time for ALL Americans, not just so-called 'concerned citizens' and family members of POW's and MIA's, but Vietnam veterans as well as other war veterans, to hold our president to his words of 1983. President Theodore Roosevelt said, "Patriotism means to stand by the country. It does not mean to

stand by the president or any other public official, save exactly to the degree in which he stands by the country. It is patriotic to support him insofar as he efficiently serves the country. It is unpatriotic not to oppose him to the exact extent that, by inefficiency or otherwise, he fails in his duty to stand by the country. In either event, it is unpatriotic not to tell the truth, whether about the president or anyone else..." The American people must be the voice of our POW's and MIA's, and we demand that they be accounted for. Your readers would damn well be concerned if it were their sons, daughters, husbands or brothers. Well, America - they are your sons and daughters, and they are still serving you.

**J. Hoffen, Commander**  
V.F.W. Post 6249  
Rocky Point

### Being "Italian-looking" is a compliment

Dear Mr. Willmott,

What in blazes is wrong with some people? Why did Suffolk Life print two apologies (pages 4 and 27 - December 9 issue) because some people complained because an individual in a story was described as an being an "Italian-looking woman?"

To me, "Italian-looking woman" draws a mental picture of a pretty, dark-haired, brown-eyed lady with beautiful skin and a zest for living, being and doing.

By apologizing, I feel that Suffolk Life is almost saying that there's something wrong with being "Italian-looking."

I would love to be described as "Irish (French, English, Scotch and American Indian) looking." Rather than -- "That middle-aged lady with the grey hair who walks with a cane."

Sincerely,  
**Betty Anne Shannon**  
Lake Ronkonkoma

### Publicity helped success of events

Dear Lou,

Thank you for publicizing our events at the farm.

**Anne Madsen**  
Senior Public Education Aide  
Suffolk County Farm  
and Education Center

Dear Editor,

A note to say thank you for the publicity for St. Gabriel's Fall Fundraiser. It was a success!

**Jo-Ann LoBue**

### Pull the switch on cable company

Dear Editor:

This is a letter to all the residents here living on the beautiful East End who enjoyed watching the Cable Value Network channel (channel 16), which Dimension Cable Services decided to switch to the Home Shopping Network on October 29, 1987.

Viewers were not given any prior notice, other than what they saw on their television screen on channel 24, which, I might add, has had the same winning bumper sticker car number for the past three weeks.

I, for one, did not welcome this switch; the two shopping networks cannot be compared. I called the office on Route 58 and was told that "my call would be accessed into the system" and that it would do not good to write a letter to the manager, that if enough people called and complained, a switch-back could be possible. I asked the girl how did I know my name would even be put on the list and that this list would indeed be presented to the manager of the office?

I have since sent him a letter regarding my feelings on this switch; the Home Shopping Network can be seen on channel 9 during the night until 6 a.m. and the merchandise does not compare to that which Cable Value had on, there is no "mad money" handed out (credited to accounts) on HSN, only "toots" from bike

horns and floozies presenting their merchandise on TV.

If there are any others who feel as I do, please, write a letter to Mr. Giampietro at Dimension Cable, do not call up and leave a name on a list that may otherwise never even be seen by him. We all know what the service is like and has been like over the past years from that office, and as usual, we are getting stuck with paying to see the garbage Dimension wants to stick on us again. Let's not have any part of it.

Yours sincerely,  
**Elaine Niemeier**  
Riverhead

### Campaign '87

Dear Editor:

Your "Campaign '87" was excellent! Bravo! I was best informed this year on the issues than ever before. Thank you.

I will keep my eyes peeled for "Campaign '88. Congratulations,  
**Ed Collazo**  
Holtsville

# The Circus Goes On

The Suffolk County circus, sometimes called the Legislature, is without a ringleader.

This past Tuesday, the Legislature met to pick the master of the center ring, but the twain did not meet. The performance went on into the evening, with Legislators arguing, fighting, cursing and making plain, damn things out of themselves, but nothing worked.

The Republican leader was wearing one of his funny hats with two beaks which said, "Follow me." Chalk up another defeat in his long list of humiliations. He wasn't able to gain a consensus out of those who wear his label but beat to a different drummer.

The Democrats were no better, for they unified in label only, and they have their leaders who march in the opposite direction of the troops. When the premier performance could not be concluded, the clowns decided to hold over their conclusion to Wednesday, January 6.

Playing to a crowd made up of taxpayer-funded staff, a host of reporters and a few interested bystanders, they met again. The purpose of the continuation of the circus was to pick a leader. Nominations were called for, but the 18 Bo Peeps never uttered an intelligent syllable. The meeting was recessed so that the various clowns could communicate with each other. The gathered staff departed, having

wasted hours of taxpayers' time, reporters had put aside important stories, with an echo heard in the hall, faintly, but distinctly, of Ho! Ho! Ho!

Another performance of the circus was to be held last Friday, but Mother Nature decided to give everyone a break and produced a major snowstorm which forced a cancellation. The last time weather interfered with a scheduled important vote, Blass arranged for four wheel drive vehicles to pick up the legislators to ensure their presence. Legislators grumbled then, however, that when it came time to go home, the four wheel drive vehicles were nowhere to be seen. The Friday meeting was cancelled, and the circus was to get underway again this past Monday.

As this is being written, the question left unanswered is: who will be the ringleader of the Suffolk County Circus? Who will be the head case at the Suffolk County funny farm? Unless some political deals were put together over this past weekend, the legislature may still be leaderless. Come to think of it, this wouldn't be much of a change.

We have a suggestion: if this standoff continues, it might be a better idea to simply cancel the rest of the legislature meetings for the rest of the year. The taxpayers deserve a break!

And why not?

We welcome your opinion, whether you support our position or not. We believe it is important for our readers to have diverse opinions presented to them.

It generally takes a minimum of two weeks for a letter to go through checking and verification, sometimes longer to appear in print. When letters are first received by Suffolk Life, they are read by the managing editor and then the editor and publisher of the paper. They are coded according to their newsworthy content and timeliness. They are input into the computer and printed out, ready for publication.

We do not substantially edit these letters. We attempt to correct spelling and punctuation if it does not affect the tone or the color of the letter. We ask that the letters be limited in length, as space is a

premium.

Letters, whenever possible, should be typed or printed in a legible hand. We only print original letters. We do not print letters that come in copy form, computer generated or mimeographed. Letters must be signed by the author. A nom de plume will be assigned on request. The address and the phone number of the author must be included.

We publish as many letters as space permits. Some letters are printed in the local editions to which they pertain, others of a broader interest are published in all 23 of our editions.

We thank all those who have participated in our letter to the editor program and we encourage all others to do so in the future.

And why not?

# Giving False Security

Seven Long Island radio stations and three in Connecticut have become participants in LILCO's attempt to gain approval for a bogus evacuation plan which does not, in any way, offer the public any reasonable hope for escape in the event of an accident at Shoreham. While these stations may believe they are doing what is in the best interests of the public, in reality they are actually, however unwittingly it may be, helping LILCO to gain approval for the plan.

Officials at the local stations have insisted their participation is born out of a desire to perform a public service for the people. Frank Petrone, the former Federal Emergency Management Agency official who was fired because he would not lie about the failure of the LILCO evacuation drill, and who has been spearheading the county's opposition to the plan, said recently: "They may believe they are doing a public service, but in essence they are not."

A major component of the LILCO plan's communication network, in its initial form, included Radio Station WALK in Patchogue. Amid all the controversy about the lack of safe evacuation for the people, WALK wisely withdrew from the plan. LILCO then went shopping for new allies, and found the seven local stations and the primary station, which is located in Connecticut.

We don't question the sincerity of the radio stations in wanting to perform a public service. We do question, however, their judgement. Without their participation, LILCO has no communication network, no

way to inform the public about an accident, and thus no workable plan. Even with the participation of the radio stations, the plan is not workable. But make no mistake about it, since they have agreed to serve LILCO, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will use that as an excuse to give the plan and the plant its blessing.

What kind of a public service will it be to have helped LILCO license their plant, and then alert the public if--in our view, the term should more accurately be when--an accident happens? What will the stations tell the public to do? Seek an escape on roadways that will be clogged? To go where? For how long? Will they be leading the public to safety, or to be trapped on local roadways?

More than 70 percent of the people of Long Island do not want that plant to operate. That's not politics, it's an honest effort to protect our area and loved ones from the dangers of a controversial, and, from the reports of many involved in its construction, an unsafe nuclear plant.

We urge the local radio stations to reconsider their participation. We urge them to meet with and discuss this matter with those on the county level who have been involved in the dedicated fight against this plant. Find out from those who really know, and have been involved in the legal efforts against this bogus evacuation plan, just how this participation will not serve, but hurt, the public. These radio stations owe the public at least that.

And why not?

# Letters To The Editor

Suffolk Life welcomes letters to the editor, and we do get many of them. Depending upon the interest of our readers, we receive as few as 50 and as many as 500 in a given week.

We encourage our readers to speak out, not only about what we have written about or editorialized, but on other subjects that are on their mind.

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SUFFOLK LIFE NEWSPAPERS  
PAGE 3 ABCDEFGH

## No One There

It happens. You frantically race for the phone. Who do you call? The doctor, the hospital, the ambulance service? In your anxiety you remember 911, the emergency number. You call. Immediately the phone is picked up, the operator calms you momentarily. She ascertains the pertinent information, presses the button to alert the volunteer ambulance. He assures you that the ambulance crew is on the way. Precious moments tick away. You know that this is a life and death situation. Every moment counts. More moments tick away, still no ambulance. You are becoming frantic. You panic, asking, "Why isn't someone here, I desperately need them." The reason is, there was no one there in your moment of need because you weren't there when someone else needed you.

Here in Suffolk County volunteerism has always been a customary way of life. Men and women from every walk of life have freely given of their time, not only for volunteer ambulance services but for our fire departments. When our neighbors were in need, these volunteers dropped what they were doing, they rushed to the scene of the need, gave medical attention or put out a fire. These volunteers not only responded rapidly, but when they arrived they knew what to do. They have spent a lot of hours being trained. They have been assisted in actual emergencies by older, more seasoned volunteers.

Frighteningly, volunteers are becoming scarce. While there are still many who do respond when needed, that number is shrinking. And we're putting a larger and larger burden on those who still do serve as volunteers.

In this day and age of two family incomes and the need, all too often for holding more than one job to meeting our financial needs, people

are not finding time to be volunteers. This, clouded with the attitude of letting someone else do it, has created a crisis situation for our volunteer agencies. Almost every ambulance corps, every fire department in Suffolk County, is desperately recruiting new members. They are looking for men and women who are willing to devote the time and effort to be trained and able and willing to respond to emergencies.

Particularly critical are the hours between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., the hours most of us work. During these hours a number of trained volunteers are away from the community and are unable to respond. Employers are being encouraged to allow workers within their facilities to become trained and be able to leave their duties to respond. Many currently do, but more are needed.

Senior citizens who are still in good health themselves and have the time to serve are being asked to turn out. Men and women who stay home are being encouraged to participate.

What about you? You may never have thought about joining an ambulance corps or a fire department. But isn't it time you did? You can't always be a taker in your life, sometimes you have to give. Is it right for you to expect your neighbors to turn out to put out a fire in your home if you won't turn out to put out a fire at your neighbors'? Is it right for you to expect that an ambulance will arrive within moments of your call for help when you have been stricken or involved in an accident if you refuse to do the same for them?

Each of us has some time and talent to give. It is only selfishness that prevents us from offering our services to our neighbors. If we want to have someone there when we need them, we better put this selfishness aside and get involved. Pick up the

phone and call your local fire department or ambulance corps today. See what their needs are. You may be surprised; they may desperately

need your help. Take the time to serve, just as others stand ready to serve you in your moment of need. And why not?

## Patience is Wearing Thin

This past week four members of the L.I.P.A. board circulated a letter to the board chairman that basically said it's time to fish or cut bait. The authors of that letter are tired of the procrastination of the chairman, who is the governor's appointee, and the long delay in reaching a decision on the proposed LILCO takeover. We agree with their view.

From the beginning, the game has been called stall. Although the governor could have appointed members to the commission soon after the legislation was signed into law, he waited almost six months, until the eleventh hour. Those of us who had been advocating L.I.P.A. argued with the governor and his staff. Although the commission members could not legally serve until January 15 of 1987, they could have organized, done the organizational work, and arranged for their studies to get underway. The governor's staff argued back: The governor and LILCO are in negotiations, let's give their negotiating a chance.

LILCO was trying to buy time and they got it. The governor lost. The L.I.P.A. board announced that it was its intention to have all studies completed and to make a decision by early summer. The deadline came and went, LILCO won -- the governor lost. It was then announced that further studies were being done to confirm the other studies. The takeover of LILCO was too big a step

to take without being absolutely, absolutely, absolutely sure. This was music to LILCO's ears. What they needed was time, and the governor was giving it to them.

We then heard that the governor was getting tough. He wanted an answer by December 1. Watch December, it's really going to move, we were told. We moved through December without so much as a peep. Santa Claus went back to the North Pole, we toasted 1987 and raised our glasses high to '88. We are now 20 days into '88 and there's still no movement.

The facts speak for themselves. Five economic studies have said the ratepayers will pay less for electricity if their electrical needs are supplied by L.I.P.A. rather than by LILCO. We have studied the issue to death. We have crossed every "T," we have dotted every "I." What we appear to lack is courage and direction from the state mansion in Albany.

If Cuomo wants L.I.P.A. to go forward, he only has to put his hand picked chairman and his soldiers into gear. The rest of the board is chafing at the bit. Governor, the question Long Islanders are asking is, "Do you have the substance and courage to move forward on this issue?" Or is all that you proclaim just showmanship and rhetoric? The people want an answer, governor. Without further delay.

And why not?

## Cop Haters

Two weeks ago we wrote an editorial regarding the need for the rank and file Suffolk County Police Officers to clean house in their own union, the P.B.A. The P.B.A. leadership was attempting to ostracize three cops who had spoken out about what they considered wrongdoings within the department. The P.B.A. leaders had decided these whistle blowers could not be tolerated as members of the P.B.A. and should be dropped from membership.

We went to some length in the editorial to give support to the vast majority of the Suffolk cops who we believe are hard working, honest and conscientious. We stressed that although some are superior and

some are bad, the vast majority of our police officers are good.

We received a letter from an officer on the Suffolk County force blasting us as cop beaters and protesting that there are no bad apples on the Suffolk County police force. We would love to agree with him but that would be as naive or as self-serving as he is.

Subsequent to reading his letter, we received another letter from a woman who had been involved in an accident. She complained that there was an open can of beer in the other party's car, but the officer did not make note of that in the accident report, nor did the officer call for a

Cont. next page

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## A call to duty

# There must be a better way

By David J. Willmott

The last time I was conscripted it was Uncle Sam who extended the invitation. My country needed me and whether I liked it or not, I was going.

Amid the Christmas cards came greetings from the Commissioner of Jurors. "You are hereby summoned to jury duty." If you are one of the following, you are exempt from service, the notice added, and listed a number of professions exempt from jury duty.

Having been the recipient of a whole host of complaints from readers about our jury system, I decided to be a volunteer. I knew going in there wasn't any way in hell I was going to be selected for jury duty because I know most of the judges, a good number of the attorneys and am familiar with many of the cases here in Suffolk County, as are most newspeople.

The jury system in Suffolk County operates on a limited standby basis. This conscription for duty is for two consecutive weeks. As a juror you are assigned a number. You are told to call a telephone number after 4 p.m. the day before you are to serve. A recorded message gives out a series of numbers and if your number is among them, you report either to Riverhead or Hauppauge. No consideration is given to where you live. In my particular situation, I reside in Southampton and was called to Hauppauge, an hour's waste of time each way and 100 miles of wasted travel. My office is four minutes away from the court house in Riverhead.

We were told that the state law requires the jurists be picked at random from throughout the county. The law should be changed. This may be fine in smaller counties, but not for one that is 80-miles in length and has an eastern and western court complex. You can still get a random sampling of jurists from the five East End towns and the five West End towns without putting people through a needless waste of time and mileage.

You arrive at the court center and just as it is in the Army, you stand in line and wait. As I waited in line, I found, attached to a pole, instructions that were hand printed on cardboard. They were illegible because the magic marker had run. You approach the jury clerk's desk filled with anger and hostility.

I was quickly mollified by the warm personality of Elaine Felice. I had expected to meet a stoic bureaucrat, yet Ms. Felice appeared to understand the jurors' aggravation.

After the paper work is processed, you sit and wait. Ms. Felice gives a lecture explaining the importance of the jury system and how the system works here in Suffolk County. Those who feel they cannot serve for various reasons line up.

On the summons you receive, you are told no exceptions will be made except for those who are exempted by law. Most of the people who line up state their employer does not pay them for jury duty, and serving will be a hardship. A few give other hardship reasons and are told to wait. Wait is what you do most.

The schedule of trials is set by the chief magistrate. The cases fall into two categories, civil and criminal. Some of the cases are quite current, others go back over years, particularly in civil matters. The lawyers for both sides have been negotiating and posturing. Both sides have told the court that they can't reach a settlement, they need a jury trial to settle the dispute.

It is the commissioner of jurors' responsibility to have sufficient jurors available to go to trial. This means that average folks are going to have to sit in a hot, stuffy room hour after hour, waiting to be called to be a juror in a trial. In the meantime, the lawyers who have notified the court that they cannot settle the dispute are now finally talking to each other and making their last best offer, which in our case resulted in five out of the seven trials being cancelled because settlements were reached.

The second part of the situation is the impaneling of the jurors. To sit a jury, at least 50 percent more jurors will be called than will be selected. A prospective juror is quizzed by both sides. Each side is looking for not the perfect juror, but the juror who will be sympathetic to their particular side of the argument. Many prospective jurors are disqualified because of firm beliefs and pre-determined conclusions. These pre-determined conclusions or beliefs could disqualify them from just about any case, and could easily be determined beforehand. Some prospective jurors, such as myself as a newsman who has knowledge of the players and a lot of the circumstances, almost always would be disqualified.

The process winds on until finally, although many are called, few actually serve. The whole process is an incredible waste of time for the average productive citizen here in Suffolk County who has been law abiding and concerned about the community. It is our understanding that the pool of jurors is taken from the pool of registered voters. In other words, if you are a good American, participate in the democratic system and vote, you will be called as a juror. You must be between 18 and 70 years of age, with no criminal convictions. There are a whole host of exemptions for the medical and the legal professions. The exemption of the legal profession is particularly disturbing for two reasons: First, why should lawyers be exempt from being jurors? Aren't they the most knowledgeable about the law? Based upon their knowledge of the law, couldn't they help with interpretation, and determining who is telling the truth and who is not? True, many of the attorneys know the

judges. But they would only be one out of 12 voices on the jury. Second, the lawyers are the ones that cause the inordinate delays and waste of time. It would not only be poetic justice to have their time wasted, as is the time of the average citizen, but if enough lawyers had to feel the frustration and loss of earnings they might quickly come up with ideas to eliminate the waste of time.

Whereas the great majority of the cases that reach the preparation for trial are settled at the last moment, why not establish a last best offer situation whereby a time is set prior to the jury being summoned that the parties have to reach a compromise. If they do not reach a compromise by this date, they must then go to trial, win, lose or draw. This, in essence, is what is happening, except now it is at the last moment after the citizens have been recruited as jurors, the courts have been booked, the judges' time allocated. It's all a needless waste of our time and our taxes. The result would be the same if a date was set for the last and best offer 30 days prior to the trial date and after that, no settlement could be made.

The modified call-in system used by Suffolk County should be improved upon. Instead of having all jurors report at 9:30 a.m. in the morning, when many jurors are not even questioned until late afternoon, the call to the jurors should be put on an hour to hour basis. Two hours prior to when the jurors will actually be needed, they can be called and told to report. The jurors can be given the days to report but left at home or at work pursuing their daily activities until they are actually needed. This would eliminate a needless waste of time.

State law should be amended, as it applies to Suffolk County, to allow the East End jurors to serve in Riverhead and the West End jurors to serve in Hauppauge, or some modification where, possibly, Brookhaven jurors who are just about mid-way, could go to Riverhead.

The fees paid jurors should be reflective of their average earnings rather than the ridiculous and insulting \$8 per day. Judges make almost \$100,000 per year and lawyers more. Everybody in the system makes out like a bandit except for the people who we expect to act impartially and honestly.

It is our understanding that the commissioner of jurors, on his own, exempts people who offer legitimate reasons why they should not be a jurist. The current commissioner, Tom Hennessy, a holdover appointee, has taken a hard line and has, in our opinion, failed to use common sense. We expect he will be replaced by the new administration of County Executive Patrick Halpin.

We would hope that the new commissioner will bring some sense to the way things are now being done. There must be a better way!

And why not?

## Willmott's and Why-Not's

David J. Willmott, Editor

### Cop Haters...

Cont. from previous page  
breathalyzer test to determine the alcohol content of the driver. We do not know the circumstances, but we do find this to be less than perfect police work.

Currently, the State Investigatory Commission is conducting hearings on the Suffolk County police. The headlines appearing daily, we agree, are creating a bad image for the police. But that investigation and those headlines should not be construed as an indictment of the entire force. It is a focus on some of the wrongdoings on the part of some of the police officers. And in some ways on the system itself.

During this past week, a report was released indicating New York State may lose \$22 million in federal road funds because monitors set up

throughout the state indicate 50 percent of the drivers are exceeding the 55 M.P.H. speed limit. The law says if you go over 55 you are breaking the law, and you should be ticketed.

How many of us drive 55? Cops are thrown into the everyday situation of being expected to bag everyone. When we are nailed we are resentful, because over 50 percent of the other drivers are breaking the law the same as we are. We take our resentment out on the cops, yet we expect the cops to be there when we need them. Our laws are a paradox and the cops are caught in the middle, trying to enforce them.

The state investigatory team that is giving the cops a black eye is concentrating their focus, and as a result the headlines, on illegal wire taps allegedly used by the Suffolk

County Police, allegedly with the approval of the District Attorney's Office, to nail drug pushers. We believe that the vast majority of Suffolk County residents feel that we should do what we have to do to rid ourselves of the drug menace here in Suffolk County.

Few people are getting excited about the rights of the criminals being violated. Yet, on a flip of a coin, the criminals' rights are our rights too, and if we develop a police state that allows our rights to be circumvented, we are in trouble.

We stand by our editorial; there are some bad apples within the Suffolk County Police Department as there would be in any organization of this size. The vast majority of police are good and deserve the support of Suffolk County residents.

The P.B.A. is wrong in excluding those who would speak out, however. The P.B.A. leadership has been too close to the management of Suffolk County, which has been equally wrong. In their efforts to get rid of the whistle blowers, the P.B.A. is creating the impression there is much to hide.

The rank and file of the Suffolk P.B.A. must clean up their own house. They should elect management of their union which creates pride in the force, rather than create disharmony and a poor image by trying to oust those who have spoken out about what they consider violations of the law and injustices.

And why not?

# Let Voters Decide

The ongoing antics of the Suffolk County legislators in their unsuccessful efforts to name a presiding officer continues as this is being written. The legislators were to try again this past Monday in a desperate attempt to keep the final decision from falling into the lap of Suffolk County Clerk Juliette Kinsella, who also the Republican leader of Huntington Town.

Democratic legislators know full well that Kinsella will pick from the Republican side of the aisle, and that pick will be the person who has the blessing of Suffolk Republican Leader Mike Blake. In essence, then, the choice would be made by Blake.

Although the Kinsella-Blake pick would undoubtedly be a Republican, the GOP legislators want to avoid a selection by the county clerk, for that would put upon the legislature the stigma of failure.

The circus-type atmosphere surrounding election of a presiding officer has resulted in some suggestions concerning alternate methods of selecting the presiding officer.

One, offered by Democrat Steve Levy, suggests shortening from 30 to 14 days the time period in which the election must be completed. While Levy makes the case this would put more pressure on the legislators to make the decision so they could "get back to policy rather than politics," we fail to see any benefit in his proposal. Legislators have been declaring they have been involved in the process for only three weeks. That's simply not true. It's been more like two-and-a-half months.

Everyone knew immediately after the November elections what the political makeup of the new legislature would be. And the backroom meetings and deal-making began almost immediately. Everyone is trying to make their own deal. "We'll

support you if you give me the chairman's seat of this committee," or "I'll give you my vote if you make me deputy presiding officer." All county business, making important decisions, the bidding process, the affairs of the people, have taken a back seat to pure, personal, political horsetrading.

Two legislators, both Republicans, Edward Romaine and newcomer Fred Thiele, Jr., have suggested the presiding officer be elected by the people and not the legislators. Now we're talking sense. Both reason it's time we take the selection of this important post out of the hands of the politicians, and let the voters decide. We agree.

We've said for a long time there must be something in the water fountain at the presiding officer's Hauptague office that does funny things to those who preside there. Most of those who have been presiding officer in recent years have suffered from delusions of power. They seem to believe they are equal in power and stature to the county executive. Joe Caputo was a terror in that position, Tony Noto was of the same suit. Lou Howard took on the role of dictator, and Greg Blass has wheeled and dealt his way into and through two years in the seat.

Enough!  
Let's put the selection process in the hands of the voters. A candidate for the office of presiding officer should make his case to the people of Suffolk County. And the people should decide the issue. Let's end the backroom deals and the political bartering that now goes on. If the people should exercise poor judgment and select an inferior leader, so be it. We would rather that than to have the job go to the highest bidder, which is now the case.

There's another alternative that makes even more sense, and is one we have strongly endorsed and continue to do so. That is to let the voters decide if we should continue with the current legislative system, or abolish the legislature. Let the voters decide if we should return to a board of supervisors as the governing body of the county.

The presiding officer's position and the power it holds should not be the subject of an auction with political position and favors the basis of the decision. That, unfortunately, is what we have now. Let's end it once and for all, by letting the voters decide, either on the position or the future of the legislature.  
And why not?

# Won't They Ever Learn?

We are totally convinced that the Republicans in Suffolk County are suicidal. The Republicans have lost just about every office worth having in this county, even though they enjoy a 2 to 1 enrollment advantage over the Democrats.

The trend started about four years ago when the old guard, who had been ousted four years prior, worked their way back into power. The attitude of the Republican bosses has been, the voters be damned. We know what's best for you. The rank and file Republicans have said, bull, and reluctantly but convincingly have pulled down Democratic levers.

After November's disaster, the Republican bosses appointed a "blue ribbon" panel to find out the reason why Suffolk Republicans were losing. The invitation went out, not to the rank and file but to the old guard leadership and the few remaining elected officials. Many saw this so called "blue ribbon" panel as an attempt not to correct the situation, but to deceive the public and keep the good old boys entrenched. Some Republicans, particularly those who have remained successful, boycotted the meeting. A plea went out from county headquarters and at the second meeting, a few more attended. Out of this meeting came a scenario that, if it is accurate and attempted, will be the final nail in the Republican coffin.

The way we get the story is Blake, for public purposes, will step down as Republican leader. Blake will remain active as a delegate for Bush in Suffolk politics. His replacement will be a fellow Bush delegate, Tom Neppell of Brookhaven. The two of them will orchestrate the Bush campaign while still keeping control of the Suffolk County Republican structure. As the plan goes, the public will see a new leader, so therefore they

will be satisfied and return to the fold. Come on guys, give us a break. The rank and file Republicans and the public will see through this sham in two seconds.

Neppell has been part and parcel of Blake's disasters. He was side by side with Blake in his fight with Judge Ernest Signorelli. He was a campaign influence in Blass' defeat by Democratic Hockbrueckner. He stands toe to toe with Blake over the loss of the county executive. Neppell helped elect former Congressman William Carney, and was part and parcel of the infamous Presidential Letter which lied to the people about President Reagan's promise not to impose an evacuation plan on the people of Suffolk County.

Neppell and Blake were known to be two of the biggest stumbling blocks in the Republicans' joining the fight against Shoreham. They may have changed their public tune, but the fact that they are backing George Bush, who is part and parcel of the troubles we have had in Washington over Shoreham, is a testimony to the fact that neither one of them has listened to the voters, their constituents. Neither Blake nor Neppell had the courage to do what State Assemblyman John Behan did when he was asked to be a Bush delegate. He told Bush he would have to take a stand on Shoreham, to listen to the people and not the nuclear industry as is now the case.

If the Republicans want to be victorious again in Suffolk County, they are going to have to send the old guard packing and replace the leadership of the organization with leaders who hear, who believe and act as the Republican rank and file wants them to. A leadership which represents the people and not simply their own political ambitions.  
And why not?

# Cost Cutting Starts Here

At the last moment, in the "catch-all" appropriations bill passed by congress, was an item that has caught America's attention. And has raised more than a little anger.

Democratic Senator Daniel Inouye from Hawaii slipped in, at the eleventh hour, a bill authorizing congress to appropriate \$8 million to build schools for North African Jews resettled in France.

We are told our government is

driving all of us to financial ruin by spending wastefully and in quantities beyond what they can raise in taxes. To spend money in France for schools makes no sense whatsoever. To spend money for parochial schools there makes less sense, when we do not spend federal monies to build parochial schools for any religion here in the United States.

Congressman George

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## Cost Cutting...

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Hockbrueckner stopped by our office this past week. Among the many things we discussed was this item. He basically said that although it is wrong, this is the way congress operates. George went to some lengths to point with pride to the constituent service he was providing for his district. He pointed out that he was attempting to duplicate the efforts of one of his mentors, Otis Pike, a Democrat, a former congressman from the First Congressional District for 19 years.

George stated that "Otis was the grand guru of constituent service, he wrote the book." In passing, we asked George how many aides he had helping him. He stated, 18, nine in the district and nine in Washington. We questioned whether this number was necessary. George answered, "I am allowed 18 by law."

We pointed out that Pike, the guru of constituent service, had four in staff. His district was approximately the same size, population wise, as George's and stretched from Nassau County throughout Suffolk. George's district boundaries run from Smithtown to the East End. We asked George, if Otis was able to develop outstanding constituent service with four people, why does he need 18? Isn't this overkill and a waste of taxpayers' money? George stated if he cut his staff in half, the savings would only amount to pennies in the context of the budget. He is allowed 18 by law, a law made by congress, and that is how many he will have on his staff.

We were left with an uneasy feeling that as long as we have a congress that has this mentality, George is not much different than the rest of them, we are never going to control the budget. If a congressman is not able to save taxpayers money by operating his office efficiently, effectively and economically, then you can't expect him to save money on the rest of the budget.

Most congressmen, particularly freshman like George, are but a whisper in the loud roar of the congressional halls. They have little effect on the over-all spending plans, they have but one vote. However, they could contribute something toward running the government economically by controlling the spending they do have control over, their own budgets.

We wonder how many federal agencies from the Pentagon on down have a spending mentality like George's. This is what I have been allotted by law so I'll spend it because it's there.

As the discussion progressed, Hockbrueckner verified our thoughts. When the planes that Fairchild was building were discontinued, \$300 million had not been spent. In the previous year's budget, our government had contracted with Grumman for six sophisticated electronic jamming devices used to ward off missile attacks. George took credit for having the monies from the Fairchild bill transferred to Grumman. On one hand he is to be congratulated because the money stayed here on Long Island and will be used for Long Island jobs. On the other hand, however, we question if the six systems that had been ordered from Grumman were enough to do the job, why buy six more just because the taxpayers had contributed \$300 million in revenues?

Maybe a couple of hundred thousand dollars that George could save on his own budget wouldn't make a big difference in the trillion dollar national budget, but wouldn't \$300 million left over from the Fairchild budget have a little bit of impact? Maybe it might even start a trend that could eliminate the national deficit and make the dollar worth a dollar again.

And why not?

of Riverhead, operates a D.E.C. certified, E.P.A. approved sewage disposal plant and a scavenger waste disposal facility, jointly owned by Riverhead and Southampton towns. These approved plants process sewage and scavenger waste, cleanse it, filter it and pump the residue into the Peconic River which feeds the Peconic Bay system.

Blass, in his release, stated that the residue is high in nitrogen content and this is the problem. The solution, he claims, is for the town to remove or reduce the nitrogen through another process that is available to them.

Janoski has said that the levels of nitrogen being released are within the acceptable standards of the D.E.C. and the E.P.A. As Blass suggested, the nitrogen can be removed. The equipment will cost \$3 million and was one of the priorities the town had wanted to establish, utilizing their share of the revenues that may be raised from the extension of the sales tax environmental issue the voters passed in November.

The plan that was put forth by Acting County Executive Michael LoGrande, called for not only the acquisition of property but provided a mechanism for sharing these sales tax funds with each of the towns for environmental purposes. County Executive Halpin has his own interpretation of what voters elected to do and has no intention of sharing these funds with towns. He wants the

towns' shares to be used for identifying and cleaning up toxic waste sites. Toxic clean up that the voters statewide, had already bonded themselves to clean up.

Projects such as Riverhead's sewage system are the type of project towns must address and find solutions to without bankrupting the local taxpayers. Blass, who originally supported LoGrande's plan and argued strongly in favor of local revenue sharing, now has flip-flopped and is supporting Halpin's proposal. Although this is typical of Blass, we find the direction he is going in is particularly confusing, considering his avowed interest in the brown tide which directly affects where he lives.

Has Blass so distanced himself from the real world of his district that he can't see the forest for the trees, or is it just another blatant example of Blass' being on whatever side of an issue his bread is buttered on? Leadership like this the county can well do without.

And why not?

## Letters to the Editor

### We report the news, not make it

Dear Editor:

I am responding to your misleading editorial, "No One is Above the Law." You have obviously placed your editorial opinion above the facts.

Your comments that any Suffolk Police officer would cover up a serious crime committed by a fellow officer and that there is a good dose of bad apples on the force is an outrageous insult to every police officer.

It is further wrong for you to compare any police officer with the average worker. Has the average worker ever had to tell parents that a child was killed in an accident or tell a wife that her husband died of a heart attack on the way home from work?

Suffolk Police officers handled 620,000 calls in 1987. These included accidents, babies not breathing, family fights, violent mental patients and assorted crimes. Does the average worker have to deal with persons vomiting and bleeding in their car on a daily basis? Neither you nor most members of the public can imagine what it is like to be a police officer. They experience more tragedy in a week than most people see in a lifetime.

A Suffolk officer changes shifts every week and works weekends and holidays, wreaking havoc with his family life. With the stress of police work, that adds up to a loss of ten years life expectancy.

Over the past two years that stress has been heightened by a relentless attack of police-bashing by newspapers and politicians. This has resulted in a severe blow to the morale of Suffolk Police officers.

Police officers are often undervalued and misunderstood by the public they serve. Your editorial does a disservice to them all. The real question people should be asking is not why are there so many bad apples in the Suffolk Police Department, but why are there so few.

Sincerely yours,  
**Officer James Francess**  
Fourth Precinct  
Hauppauge

**Editor's note:** It's obvious you only glanced at the editorial and did not read it thoroughly. We went to great lengths to point out that most cops are good and appreciate the job they do have. We did not say that cops would cover up serious crimes. We did say that they could be expected to give a fellow officer a break, if possible, in a more serious offense than a traffic violation. What we had in mind was an altercation between two individuals, one being a police officer.

When you have a group of people the size of the Suffolk County Police Department, just by sheer numbers, you are going to have the good and the bad, as we pointed out.

Officer Francess, if you don't believe this, you are living in some kind of fairy land. The point of the editorial was for the Suffolk County Police Department to regain its respect. It should not allow its union to bully these officers who have had the courage to speak out about the department's shortcomings. Many officers we have spoken to, both on the force and retired, have told us of problems within the department. They have stressed that the average cop wants the situation rectified, but is reluctant to speak out for fear of reprisals. This was the point of the editorial. As long as members of the department are feverishly defending the system as it is, there is no hope for change and there is less hope that the public will have the faith and respect that you and your fellow officers desire. You must remember one thing, we in the media do not make the news, we report on it.

### "...It is history in the making"

Dear Editor:

I am quite proud of this assignment completed by my 11-year-old daughter, Susan Lee, for her sixth grade Social Studies class at the Bellport Middle School, and would like to share it with you and hopefully, with your patrons.

Have a happy new year.

Sincerely,  
**Priscilla Lee**  
E. Patchogue

Mikhail and Raisa Gorbachev came to the United States last week to have a summit with President Reagan. The summit was about our bombs, you know, the kind that can blow up planets!!!! They decided to disarm them and they signed a treaty. Are they lying? No, are we lying? I hope that we are both telling the truth because if not, what good is trust? And what hope is there for everlasting world peace? I am following this very closely, for it is history in the making. Our children will probably be reading about it in their social studies books.

IF FOR ANY REASON,

**SUFFOLK LIFE**

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