

# Will it be a new beginning?

The Republican party in Suffolk County, as well as the state, is in a crisis. After last year's disastrous gubernatorial race, the party has lost meaning and identity. Its leadership is old and decrepit. On the state level it includes remnants of the Rockefeller era, and a new blood has been kept out.

Suffolk County, for the last three years, has had caretaker leadership under John Cochrane. The county party previously had attempted to purge itself and rebuild with the primary victory of Peter Cohalan. At this juncture, the leadership of the county organization was taken over by the late Anthony J. Prudenti, who found the party structure in shambles and inherited almost a million dollars in debt. He was well on his way to both rebuilding the party structure and paying off the debt when the old guard within the party made their move to regain control. During the last 18 months of Prudenti's tenure, he freed the party of debt, but was unable to ward off the powers to be. Prudenti brought to the county organization

enthusiasm, and, more important, uncompromising ethics and honesty.

Prudenti built up a loyal following of people who thought like he did. There was more to the Republican party than personal enrichment. A belief in good government and an adherence to the beliefs and principles of Republicanism without personal gain was the first order of business.

The party was taken over by Mike Blake and company. The organization was split. Under Blake, the Republicans suffered losses, including the county executive's seat. Both sides saw the deterioration and John Cochrane was selected, not as a leader, but a caretaker.

Cochrane announced when he took office that he did not intend to make the leadership of the Republican party a lifetime career. His love and choice was the assembly. He has now announced his resignation and a free for all is under way for the leadership of the party.

There are those who are still

keenly interested in the Republican party for their personal enrichment, power and control. Tom Neppel is their chosen candidate. Walter Hazlitt, Brookhaven Town GOP leader, was interested in the position but it now appears he will be kept on as Suffolk County Water Authority chairman, precluding him from holding this position.

Two other men have emerged seeking the nomination. Robert Lifson of Huntington, who engineered a rebellion in the Town of Huntington and gained control of the leadership, has thrown his hat into the ring. Lifson is in his forties and an attorney. He has a reputation of being a good political technician, but is not dynamic and has been described by some intimates as lacking enthusiasm.

The dark horse seeking the position is Assemblyman Tom Barraga. When we first heard Barraga's name mentioned, we thought back to a recent candidates' night where he took off his coat, rolled up his sleeves and, like a Southern preacher, spoke to the

audience enthusiastically, generating excitement. Other candidates left as their turn to speak ended, but Barraga stayed around, showing a genuine interest in the people and engaging in one to one conversations.

Instead of just throwing his hat into the ring, as most candidates have done, Barraga has presented a written organizational plan detailing how, under his leadership, he intends to revitalize the organization. The mainstay of the plan is to rebuild the organization by making the committee people purposeful and meaningful. The plan indicates his first order of business is to convert paper committee people to living, working committee people who will perform the function a committee person is supposed to do. Being in touch with the people within their district, seeking out their opinions and encouraging them to work for the Republican party. Building on an active grassroots county committee organization, Barraga intends to go outside the normal channels and seek out the opinions and support of businesses, and environmental, labor and civics groups to develop an organization that will not only return strength to the Suffolk Republican organization, but be instrumental in rebuilding the chaos that Suffolk government has become.

Barraga's weak point is like Cochrane's, he is an assemblyman. Barraga answered this objection by stating that as his fund-raising endeavors succeed, and as the organization is able to support a salary equal to his assembly income, he will resign from the assembly and devote himself full-time to the leadership.

Barraga is fresh, clean and independent. He might be too independent for the town leaders, and he definitely is not the candidate of choice of the Islip Republican organization, which he has battled in the past because of his independence. But he shows promise of being the medicine the Republican party needs if it is to regain health, credibility and hope.

The town Republican leaders, who make up the Suffolk County Republican Committee, will choose their interim leader during January. Already, there is talk of an agreement between the leaders of the three largest towns to dominate the selection process. We hope the rank and file committeemen don't allow themselves to be the pawns of the leaders, that they demand an active voice in picking the best candidate rather than the choice of the leaders. We hope they choose well and pick someone who has the capabilities of rebuilding the organization, developing the finances needed to run an aggressive and active county executive campaign and campaigns for the towns.

Suffolk is in danger of becoming a one-party county with the inroads the Democrats have made over the last several years. The wrong choice for leadership at this juncture can well make Suffolk County a solid Democratic county, without a two-party system of checks and balances. We hope the Republicans choose well. The future of the Republican party, and of the county, may well depend on that choice.

And why not?

## We are up on '91

During the last several weeks, with all the talk of gloom and doom, we have asked many individuals and businesses how they were doing personally. Almost every individual we spoke to, and they were from all walks of life, said they were doing just about as well as they did the year before. They earned about the same amount of money, some had received modest wage increases.

Businesses in the mainstream had been able to maintain sales, but did not grow. Net profits were down, as costs had risen, but the businesses were not able to transfer the increased costs onto their customers.

Real estate, banking and the legal communities that served it had taken a beating as deflation took effect. Most agreed that business would have improved over the last six months if it had not been for the troubles in the Middle East. They personally were nowhere near as bad as the media was projecting. All showed concern about 1991.

There is no question we are in a period of recession. We have been in it since September, 1987. During the eighties, wages, values and prices exploded. It was too much of a good thing. Houses jumped from under \$100,000 to \$250,000 and \$300,000. The minimum wage, although pegged at \$3.35, became \$4 to \$5 per hour.

Kids who used to be satisfied with a dollar or two an hour for babysitting and other odd jobs began demanding \$5 per hour. Executive salaries that once were considered reasonable at \$20,000 plus, became puny at \$40,000 plus. Everything accelerated, but the value of the dollar decreased. It got to a point where no matter how much money was made, it was difficult to maintain a standard of living.

Nothing had a real price or a regular price. Normal 100 percent markups, 50 percent margins became 300 to 500 percent markups in some retail trades. Sales of 50 percent off became the only time people bought, and even then they doubted if they were getting a good deal. Deflation happened as people no longer had confidence that the money they were paying was producing value in return. They pulled back, they hesitated.

Businesses facing reduced sales are forced to look in the mirror. If they are smart, they don't like what they see and they examine their operation. They cut out the fat and the luxuries. They encourage more productivity and find ways to produce more goods at lower prices. The net result is that not as much money is spent, consumers are able to buy more for their dollar, and yet, reasonable margins of profit are able to be maintained by cutting unnecessary costs.

We believe during 1991 we will ex-

perience much greater deflation and, providing that the Middle East stabilizes, the economy can rebound through a more productive standard, producing a more solid and realistic climate. Excesses we were used to in the eighties will have to be curbed as everything will be back to basics. This is what the private sector and most people will face.

Government will be forced to come aboard. Their transition can be reasonable or a blood bath, depending upon the leadership of our government officials. Whether we are individuals, business owners or government leaders, we must establish a clear-cut set of priorities. These priorities should be broken down into absolute necessities, desirables and frivolous luxuries, then balanced against the money we have available. What we can't afford, we must do without. If we all do our part and put our greed and "me tooism" aside, life in the nineties can be satisfying, productive and rewarding.

We're up on the nineties and we believe the people are too. Let's be positive and determined and believe that we have the strength and will to go forth and produce the quality of life we want. We have confidence that together we have the ability to shed the dark clouds of doom and bring back the sun in '91. Don't you?

And why not?

## Happy and healthy New Year!

# Are they leaders or NIMBYs?

There are 230 elected legislators in New York State. The question is, are they leaders or NIMBYs? With the financial crisis facing the state, Governor Mario Cuomo has proposed that all state workers give up a cumulative total of one week's pay over the next 13 weeks. This week's pay would be held by the state and paid to the employees when they leave state employment.

The rank and file state employees do not have any choice in this matter. The 230 legislators who, you would think, would have led the way, are dragging their feet when it comes to their own salaries.

As of this writing, only Senate Minority Leader Rappleyea and Assemblyman Thomas Barraga (R-West Islip) have volunteered to lead the elected state officials. Other legislators are trying to hide behind a loophole that requires legislators to be paid as prescribed unless the law is changed. That's pure chicken manure and a perfect example of a NIMBY mentality. Any place but in my backyard.

Legislators were elected to lead. Let them lead instead of squirm. We are very disappointed in our local legislators who cried in anguish about the state fiscal crisis. Why weren't they the first ones to personally offer to

sacrifice, rather than have to be a public embarrassment? Management cannot ask labor to sacrifice without sacrificing first itself.

We suggest, particularly to our local legislators, not only to join the lag in payroll but give up a small percentage of their salary to show their sincerity in coping with the state fiscal crisis. They should be looking in the mirror and asking, "Am I not part of

the problem, receiving between \$56,000 and \$85,000 a year for a part-time job? Am I not part of the problem by allowing the leadership to keep us in office beyond April 1, which prevents me from spending the other nine months pursuing an honest living and performing public service for my constituents?"

The state legislators, both in the Democratic-controlled assembly and

the Republican-controlled senate, share with the governor the responsibility for the fiscal crisis this state is in. There are no further avenues of taxation in New York. The government must be drastically cut back and, as Harry Truman said, "when you are on the top, the buck stops here." Let the Long Island delegation lead the state by example. Let them make us proud of them.

And why not?

## EIT: Misuse of funds

About four years ago, Governor Mario Cuomo proposed, and the New York State Legislature approved, the creation of a new program designed to reward extra special teachers for extra special efforts. That program—Excellence in Teaching (EIT)—is now under fire from three school-related groups which seek to eliminate the program, at a savings of \$150 million. And they are right! EIT has become nothing more than a windfall for all teachers, not a reward for the better educators.

The state School Boards Association, the Council of School Superintendents and the Association of

School Business Officials propose EIT be eliminated as one of the state budget deficit cutting measures. But a howl of protest has been raised by United Teachers' President Thomas Hobart, who exclaims "EIT dollars have stanching the flow of many fine teachers from the profession, and have served as an incentive to high school students and others to become teachers." Hobart notes, "EIT not only has raised teachers' salaries by an average of almost \$1,000, it also has been a catalyst for locally negotiated increases."

It's time to stop wasting taxpayers' money for a program that is not meeting the goals for which it was created. Good teachers, those who give that extra time, that extra effort, who reach the kids and make a meaningful impact on their educational lives, are being cheated. Educators have told us in the past the EIT money is being given to all teachers, rather than as an incentive to the best, because it is too difficult to select those teachers to be rewarded. Even those teachers who agree the present dole-it-out-to-everyone system is wrong, raised concerns that politics would enter the selection process.

That's a shame! We would have no problem with rewarding the special educators. They, through innovative and dedicated ways, have earned such recognition, both financial and public. But simply passing the funds through as a reward to all teachers, the mediocre and the good, is dishonest. Skirting the real reason for the program because the educators can't come up

with a workable, and honest, selection process is a fraud.

EIT was not created to give all teachers an extra \$1,000, nor was it designed to make it easier for salary negotiations. EIT has done nothing to improve the education of our youth. Consider these words: "Many of those who do graduate from high school lack the skill and knowledge to function effectively in a sophisticated society. Even many of our 'best' students, those who graduate with honors and go on to attend prestigious colleges, know less math and science and history and foreign language than their agemates in other industrialized nations." Those aren't our words! They come from the State Education Department proposal for A New Compact for Learning, an effort to revise the educational system of today.

It's time that Hobart, and others in the world of education, put an end to their "gimme, gimme, gimme" attitudes and become partners in an effort to produce better educated students, at lower cost. The financial picture on all levels of government, and in school districts, is very dismal. The burden on the taxpayers threatens to choke them. We can no longer continue with the business-as-usual attitudes of our past.

The challenge to Hobart is this: come up with a way to use the EIT monies as a special reward for the special teachers, in an honest, non-political fashion. If he can't, or won't, the program should be killed to end the waste of taxpayers' dollars.

And why not?

### The public speaks

## We, the people

During the next week you will be reading about how the people who participated in a poll called "We the People" on Long Island really feel.

In a multi-media poll conducted by Marketing, Inc., a nationwide telephone research company sponsored by Suffolk Life Newspapers, the Long Island Business News and This Week Publications, a cross-section of Nassau and Suffolk residents were asked a series of questions pertaining to their lives, their government and their perceptions. The uniqueness of this poll is that the sponsorship and the determined agenda was developed to achieve an unbiased rather than a "desired response."

The poll was the brain child of Steve Gettleman, a principal partner in Marketing, Inc., who has expressed a keen interest in the people of Long Island and the government surrounding them.

As we remember, Long Island led the country into the recession in the late 70's. It also led us out of the recession in the early 80's. Will the same thing happen again? The poll offers some interesting insights. Will Patrick Halpin survive as county executive? Is he beatable? By whom?

The poll lets us know what Suffolk residents feel. Should we abolish the county legislature and replace it with a board of supervisors? What is the perception of both Suffolk and Nassau residents? We must remember that Nassau

already has a board of supervisors. How does their form of government compare with ours? What do you think about children with AIDS being allowed to go to school with other children? We, the people of Long Island, speak up on this issue as well as a host of others.

The results of the poll will be revealed by Suffolk Life and the other participating media in the forthcoming weeks. The results should make interesting reading and offer insight into what the most important segment of our society—the people—have on their minds.

And why not?

## Legislature has the control

The responsibility for accelerating school costs has been bounced back and forth from local school boards to the governor, to the education department and the legislature. A careful reading of the state constitution reveals that the legislature is empowered to cap spending on education and the amount that can be derived from real estate taxes.

We are sick and tired of hearing legislators say, "we have no control over local school boards." They do, but they have not acted on the powers they have. Long Islanders are being choked to death with real estate taxes. Between 60 percent and 70 percent of our oppressive real estate tax burden goes into schools. During the last 18 months,

although school boards were keenly aware that residents could not pay any more, the board members authorized contracts with unions granting raises of 20 to 24 percent, plus increments over the next three years. Where the money to fund these raises is to come from is not apparent. Certainly not from the state. Certainly not from prudent cuts in budgets, or cutbacks in staff, administration or some of the "extras" that have crept into the system. That leaves one source of funding—the taxpayer.

But homeowners are already choking on their current real estate taxes. A record number of homes have been placed up for sale and the value of homes has decreased by up to 50 percent. With the

state in a fiscal mess, local governments facing deficits, increased energy and garbage disposal costs digging deeper into the our pockets, the plain, simple fact is the taxpayers cannot afford to pay any more.

The state had indicated it was willing to eliminate some mandates and clarify others. If the school boards under their own volition refuse to bring the cost of education under control, then our state legislature must act responsibly and place caps on the cost of education through restricting the amount of money that can be raised through real estate taxes. They have the power, let them exercise it.

And why not?

# What's wrong with PERB?

New York State employees, and teachers, are covered by the Taylor Law, which forbids them from striking. When negotiations between units of government and the unionized employees are deadlocked, the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) is called into the picture, charged with sifting out the facts and making recommendations. This intermediate step before binding arbitration is supposed to give both management and labor a realistic overview of the facts as they pertain to the negotiations, and the clarification allowing for reasonable compromise and settlement. This is not the way it has worked.

We normally receive copies of the PERB findings. Often we are left shaking our heads and wondering if these allegedly impartial referees don't have their heads stuck in the sand.

An excellent example is the fact-finder's report on the Bayport/Bluepoint School District negotiations. In his recommendation concerning salaries, the fact-finder had this to say: "While it is true that the news media and so-called 'economic indicators' have been crying wolf for the past several months, the facts of our economy do not bear out the cries of gloom and doom. Certainly far worse conditions have existed and we survived during the relatively short life of the Taylor Law. All of a sudden governing bodies are finding out that taxes are not necessarily going to be as high as projected, that layoffs are not quite as necessary as thought to be at first and just maybe things are not as bad as the doom-sayers thought." The fact-finder recommended: "After reviewing all of the evidence I recommend that, effective 7-1-90, salaries be increased by seven (7%) percent; effective 7-1-91, salaries be increased by seven (7%) percent; and effective 7-1-92, salaries be increased by seven (7%) percent."

Compounded, this series of increases exceeds the 21 percent it appears to give. This, in a school district which, under an austerity budget, had a tax rate increase of 24 percent in Islip and 19 percent in Brookhaven and the district. This is a fact of life he apparently chose to ignore. In this district, the taxes were not only as high as had been projected, they were far more. It is obvious this fact-finder was not interested in the facts.

The fact-finder in this situation lives in Huntington. How he can come to the conclusion he reached, particularly in dismissing the perilous econ-

omy we are experiencing, is beyond belief. Doesn't he see, in his own neighborhood, the "For Sale" signs? Doesn't the fact-finder hear the neighbors crying out in anguish that they can no longer afford the tax burden? They are losing their homes, they must move.

Why doesn't the fact-finder check with local businesses to see the kind of raises that the private sector is giving? These are being driven by competition and profits. Doesn't the fact-finder understand that residents do not have

## NIMBYism or honest concern?

"...Under pressure from a coalition of NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) organizations, the town (Brookhaven) recently agreed to undertake a full environmental review of its much-praised deal with the Town of Hempstead. This might represent only a minor delay. But it could also be the first step toward breaking the pact with Hempstead. That would be costly for the people of both towns."

So said *Newsday* in an editorial last week about the trash for ash deal between Brookhaven and Hempstead, an agreement which would send Brookhaven garbage to Hempstead for incineration and Hempstead ash to Brookhaven for landfilling. *Newsday* ignores some important facts in expressing grave concern about NIMBYism. First, it wasn't NIMBYism that caused the civic groups to exert pressure in this matter, it was the fact that Hempstead refused to make available a sample of the trash for the civics to have tested by an independent laboratory. And because Brookhaven Town officials made no effort to secure their own sample for testing, or show enough concern to insist, themselves, on a full environmental review.

What is the purpose of an environmental review? To ensure that a project will not have an adverse impact on the environment, on the quality of the groundwater that lies beneath the landfill. Isn't the quality of that water the very reason why the Landfill Law prohibits the town from dumping garbage there? Why wasn't a full environmental review undertaken before the trash for ash agreement was signed? Because that action was covered under

the ability to absorb gigantic increases in their taxes? Their ability to earn has been stifled and their taxes must be reflective of the economy. These are the real facts, not the fiction this particular fact-finder spewed.

If the rest of the economy is being forced to settle for two, three and four percent increases, why should one segment of the economy, which already is making 20 percent more than the combined family incomes of the rest of the economy, be granted increases that are 100 percent higher than the

segment that is paying the bills?

Fact-finders engaged by PERB must represent those who are paying taxes which support the government or school districts as well as those who are working for the government and schools. If they can't meet their responsibilities and be the FACT-finders they are supposed to be, instead of the fiction-finders they are fast becoming, the legislature should dissolve PERB and allow stalled negotiations to go straight to arbitration.

And why not?

a DEC consent order, and if that is the case, an environmental review is not necessary. Why not? Does a consent order make it an impossibility for an adverse impact on the environment to occur? Of course not! It's a loophole that the town chose to utilize until the civics hired their own environmental counsel to examine the matter. The civics did not take that action because they had a lot of money to spend. They did it because their own public officials were using a loophole to hide behind.

Did the town officials conduct their own study to ensure that the ash they would be placing into their landfill would not become a source of contamination? No, they relied on a study offered by the company which operates the Hempstead incinerator. That's great! That's like having LILCO audit your electric bills when you suspect they are too high.

Why the great concern that an environmental review is to be conducted? Might it find something that would be harmful to the deal? Will it offer evidence that ash is not as safe as some would have us believe? Shouldn't we know before tons of it is dumped in the Brookhaven landfill? Who will pay the bill if the ash causes contamination? *Newsday*? Hempstead? The DEC? Or the people of Brookhaven Town? Such costs could be far more than the financial impact of scuttling the trash for ash deal if, indeed, it proves to be environmentally unsafe.

It may well be this ash for trash cooperative effort is a good way to solve the problems of both towns. If

the ash is safe! But from where we sit, Brookhaven is accepting all the risk, and Hempstead none. Brookhaven will have no control over what materials are being incinerated, nor where they come from. Accepting this ash blindly, without any knowledge of what it may contain, is not only foolish, it is reckless. If the EPA or DEC change the rules about contamination limits in the future, the ash that is landfilled will be Brookhaven's responsibility as long as the ash is in its landfill. The town must, for the health and financial protection of its residents, determine now, not later, whether the ash is perfectly safe, or could cause contamination.

The state's efforts to place a regional ashfill in the Yaphank area were thwarted by an outpouring of concern from the public. This ash for trash deal has all the makings of a side door attempt to put into place a regional ashfill at the town landfill. The state, through the DEC, is trying to accomplish this through regulatory threats and loopholes that prevent public input.

NIMBYism? No, we don't think the civic groups are guilty of that charge, which is raised time and again to offset criticism. If town officials took steps to ensure the safety of their residents by insisting on an environmental review and an independent study of the ash, it would not have been necessary for the civics to take the action they did. We await with interest to see what information their attorney develops. Some political futures could well hinge on the outcome.

And why not?

## Hail Caesar, the lights are on!

Last week, you probably were reminded by other motorists to turn your lights on when it was raining. There is a good reason for this, one that could one day save your life.

A new law went into effect on January 1 which requires that headlights must be turned on when windshield wipers are being used. This requirement is worthy of applause for the lives it can help save.

This came to mind last week during a dark, dismal and rainy day. Cars obeying the law were clearly visible. Others, without their lights, were sometimes swallowed up in the spray of other traffic. Visibility of traffic is greatly enhanced with the use of lights, and we urge all our readers to faithfully obey this law. Better to be seen than to be hit.

The law was sponsored by Senator Caesar

Trunzo (R-Brentwood). He deserves credit and praise for a very sensible law.

Many other states have had a similar law and it has resulted in lives being saved. Personally, we would not object to seeing the law extended. Whenever the ignition switch is turned on, the lights on cars would come on, day or night, rain or shine.

And why not?

# Troops, we are behind you

There are few people who like war. In today's age of modern technology, the call of the wild, kill or be killed, has been suppressed. Unfortunately, however, there are those who still live by this primitive instinct. They believe that through force they can impose their will on others. They perceive everyone else as being cowardly and weak.

On August 5, Saddam Hussein attacked and captured Iraq's tiny neighbor, Kuwait. Hussein indicated that this was only the beginning. Other Arab nations, Israel and the United States, were his other objectives and enemies.

Hussein had at his disposal outlawed chemical weapons and, it is feared, possible atomic capabilities. For the size of the country, he has enormously well-equipped military forces, trained and hardened by battle.

The world reacted in disbelief and disgust. We, in the United States, after the Vietnam debacle and sensing the end of the cold war with Russia, were left in disbelief. President Bush reacted calmly and with determination. He instituted every conceivable

method of diplomacy to reverse this situation. For five months he cajoled, pledged and threatened Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. After all efforts had been exhausted, and the deadline set by the United Nations had come and gone, the allied forces struck Iraq and the war commenced.

The war effort has the support of the vast majority of Americans. We support our President, our Congress, but most importantly, our troops. Our men and women in the Middle East have been in our prayers and on our minds for the last five months.

The Vietnam War was not a popular war. It appeared to have no purpose and our leadership mistakenly fought it piecemeal. This war is not one that we started. Mankind was being attacked by an aggressor who had no qualms about using the most uncivilized means to further his aims, including the poisoning of civilian people. He used these weapons against his own people.

As Americans, we recognize the right of all to disagree. Prior to the start of the war, and immediately fol-

lowing, some Americans have taken to the streets to demonstrate against our commitment. It is their right to disagree, but they do not have to be disagreeable in doing so. While some peace demonstrations have been peaceful, others have been disruptive, blocking traffic and performing acts of civil disobedience.

While demonstrators have the right to express their view, they also have the responsibility to provide a workable alternative. Their signs declare "Negotiate!" But how does one negotiate with a madman? With a madman who has no concern for human life or for his own people? With a madman who launches a missile attack against residential areas of Israel, with no regard for the lives of innocent people?

American forces in the Middle East are committed forces. They are volunteers and those who chose to serve in Reserve units or the National Guard. None have been drafted. They are, for the most part, well-trained, professional soldiers who understand the complexities and risk of their assignments. They are backed by the lat-

est, most modern and sophisticated military hardware and software ever compiled.

We are saddened by those who diminish these volunteers' commitment. We feel sad for our men and women in the Middle East to have to hear about people at home carrying on in a disgraceful manner. One can only wonder how the troops feel, fearing they, too, will suffer the disgraceful attitude many in our land aimed at returning Vietnam veterans. These same people would be the first to call a cop if they were assaulted or robbed. Our armed forces are the cops of government, just as the police are the law and order keepers of our communities.

No one wants war! The troops don't, their loved ones don't, we don't. But we are at war, and this is the time to unite, to stand behind our country and our troops. Our prayers, our support go out to the brave men and women who are fighting and sacrificing their lives so that we can continue to be free, and have the right to disagree.

And why not?

# End the circus

Are you as fed up as I am in these hard financial times seeing our county government waste our tax dollars suing each other?

In the great circus of Suffolk we have two clowns, the county executive and the legislature. Instead of getting their act together, they disagree for the sake of disagreeing. Instead of settling their disputes as rational people, they resort to the legal beagles who rack up the hours in court.

Both are at fault, the county executive who can't compromise and puts a political twist to everything, and the legislators who believe they are 18 mini-county executives, who say, "do it my way or don't do it." The county executive we can change, the county legislature, as a body, we should abolish.

Under the new Initiative and Referendum laws it is possible to do away with the county legislature and replace it with a board of supervisors. The board of supervisors, the former government we had here in Suffolk County, is comprised of the 10 supervisors, one in each of Suffolk's towns. The supervisors are executives by title. They are responsible for the finances of their towns. They understand budgets and have a tendency not to get bogged down in raw politics.

The 10 supervisors would act on the county as representatives of the towns, but would vote according to the number of gubernatorial votes that had been cast in each town during the last gubernatorial election. In this way, every voter would have equal representation. The tiny town of Shelter Island would not have a voice equal to a huge town like Brookhaven. Representation would be according to size.

It's time for the citizens to put an end to the circus, we can't afford it.

Petitions are being drawn that will be circulated throughout Suffolk about putting the question 'what form of government do you want?' on the ballot. We hope to gather these petitions rapidly, ensuring that the issue will be on the ballot in November with more than adequate time for this issue to be debated. The public will be presented with both sides of the issue by those who favor the continuation of the legislature, and those who favor a board of supervisors.

If you would like to volunteer your help circulating petitions, we encourage you to send in your name and address on the coupon printed below. This is your opportunity to take part in our democracy. Let the people have the choice.

And why not?

# The next county executive

Who should be the next county executive? "High Tax" Halpin, or one of a host of other, Republican, aspirants? From where we sit, we would like to see the next county executive possess the following qualifications:

**LEADERSHIP**--A person who leads by example. Knows who they are, what they are and what their mission is. A person who has the ability to sift fact from fiction. A person who does not give a tinker's damn about politics because there is no need to be re-elected.

**MANAGEMENT AND EXPERIENCE**--A person who has a track record as a manager and administrator, a proven supervisor of people. One who has successfully negotiated tough labor con-

tracts, and brought organized labor to the realization that there is a bottom to the barrel and only what is fair to all concerned can be afforded. Someone who has demonstrated they can do with less and accomplish more. A person who knows that you encourage people to follow by leading through reasonableness, truthfulness, feeling and compassion.

We would look for a person who understands the bottom line. One who is able to separate waste from need. Who has no tolerance for favoritism or patronage. A person who holds in disdain the trough from which the incompetent and the greedy feed. Someone who holds the people of Suffolk County in great respect and realizes that it is through their

efforts that this is a good place to live, and if we impede their ability to survive by overtaxing them, we force them to leave.

**HONESTY AND ETHICS**--The person chosen to lead Suffolk County should be beyond reproach. His or her background subjected to search and scrutiny. More simply put, a person who has demonstrated throughout life that he or she knows the difference between right and wrong, and any error made will be on the side of honesty and integrity.

Call it idealistic, the impossible dream. That person is there. We must find him or her and offer our strong support.

And why not?

**The people's choice:**

Yes. I would like to take part in putting the question of what form of government I want on the ballot. I am willing to circulate petitions.

Name -----

Street -----

Town/Hamlet-----

Phone Number -----

# The lure of the almighty dollar

The lure of financial assistance can often sway opinions into decisions that would otherwise be avoided. Such is the case with the proposed Peconic Bay Estuary Program, which has been the subject of much discussion on eastern Long Island.

Proponents of the estuary program say that the funding, which is reported to be \$1 million a year for five years, would be valuable for planning and ensuring preservation of the Peconic Bay system. The funding would come from the federal, state and local level, with 75 percent coming from the federal government, and the state and local levels responsible for 25 percent in matching funds. Certainly, everything possible should be done to preserve the Peconic Bay system. Southampton Supervisor George Stavropoulos, in a recent statement at an estuary program hearing, described the Peconic system as a "jewel," and he did not overstate its value.

Having said that, however, Stavropoulos raised some very interesting comments that deserve strong consideration. "Now, at a time where there

are serious cutbacks on all levels of government and a seemingly ever-increasing tax burden on the taxpayers, it is particularly appealing to jump on a bandwagon that promises a source of funds to undertake a wide-ranging study of the Peconic Bay Estuary Program. It has been represented that this program will only be undertaken and implemented upon a consensus of the local governments involved, while funded by the federal, state and county governments."

"However," he added, "the prior history of such programs does not support the purely benevolent attributes that its advocates advance."

Stavropoulos pointed to promises of "Superfund" dollars to address remedial measures of a Southampton Town landfill. But those funds never came. He noted that the implementation of the state Wild, Scenic, Recreational Rivers Act to the Peconic River by the state "does not lend itself to a deep trust between the towns of Riverhead and Southampton and the DEC." Arbitrary decisions by the DEC in regard to regulations over the

Peconic River under this designation have led to much controversy and regulations.

The DEC's role in the infamous landfill ban, which will financially strangle taxpayers in the long run, was also cited, as were other instances of enforcement fiascos, demands without assistance or cooperation, and regulatory nightmares.

What has all this to do with the Peconic Bay Estuary Program? The nominating document for this program provides the answer: "The sponsoring agencies, which include the USEPA, NYSDEC, and SCDHS, will be ultimately responsible for the disbursement of project funds. The goals, recommendations and Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan which are formulated by the Management Committee under the guidance of its subcommittees must receive approval by the sponsoring agencies prior to being finalized." In other words, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the state DEC and the county Department of Health have the say. "Since we're providing the bucks, we have the full control," is the attitude.

This is not just a matter of dollars with strings attached, it is putting control of these precious waters into the hands of bureaucratic regulatory agencies which have so many times in the past shown they are incapable of common sense, cooperative spirit, and have a track record of promises made, but not kept. A prime example of what might be expected is the instance in which the DEC, because it did not have, or so it claimed, enough staff to check East End waters for contamination, decided to close them down, all of them, contaminated or not. It didn't matter that they were putting baymen out of work and causing financial hardship. The uproar that developed caused even the governor, who has looked the other way all too often in matters concerning the DEC, to step in and finally the ban was undone.

Interestingly, some of the very same officials who are now advocating giving full control to the DEC, Health Department and EPA, screamed bloody murder at that time. And now they are, knowingly, willing to give the DEC extended authority over the Peconic? Unbelievable! Will the Peconic system one day be closed for use and enjoyment because there is not "sufficient staff" to oversee it?

We regard the Peconic system as a jewel and much more. We want it preserved as much as anyone else. But sensibly. With local control. With the East End towns, which virtually surround these waters, given major input and not squeezed out by the super powers-to-be.

We would urge East End public officials to go very slowly on this matter. Don't be swayed by the frenzied clamor of those who would put controls over everything, putting their wishes above the rights of the people to enjoy the natural resources we are blessed with.

Local officials who are pushing this proposal had better make sure every "i" is dotted, and every "t" is crossed, leaving nothing to chance and certainly nothing to the discretion of regulatory agencies which are more concerned with power than they are with the rights of the people. Or better yet, put the issue on the ballot and let the people have the final say!

And why not?

# Saddam left unchecked

We have heard a number of people during the past week argue we should not have done anything in the Middle East. Some have gone so far as to say Saddam Hussein was right in his invasion and capture of Kuwait. They claim we are only involved because of oil and the price we must pay at the pump.

Let's look at what could have happened if we ignored Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Hussein gave every indication after this invasion that Saudi Arabia was his next target. His hatred of the Jews made Israel almost guaranteed as a future goal.

Let's just say he went no further. There are those who say that Hussein would have been content with oil in the \$25 per barrel range and that the free world could have lived with these prices. Is there anyone in this country who really believes Hussein would have been content with these small acquisitions? Is there anyone who

could doubt that he would not continue to build and expand his chemical and nuclear facilities? At what point do you then say enough is enough?

How then, when this madman has built a military machine that would equal or surpass both the United States and the Soviet Union, do you cope with his might? What would be the loss of lives and chances of world peace at this point?

Hussein never showed his benevolent nature before, with the billions of dollars his kingdom has earned from oil production. We have never seen any documentation that indicated that he was an exporter of his oil wealth to other, less fortunate countries or people. Or that he showed much concern for human life.

War is never pleasant. Military action always has a cost. If you don't stop naked aggression at its beginning, history tells us it grows as it expands.

We pray that our intervention was not too late; that the five months between the start of this war and our active participation did not allow him and his troops to become so fortified that additional lives will be lost that could have been spared. Could we say the same a year from now?

Let us pray that this war ends quickly and with the least amount of loss of life on both sides. But no matter what happens, as long as we are fighting, we must let our troops know we support their efforts, and that we are proud of their contributions and courage.

We can disagree on how this crisis should be resolved, but there should be no disagreement that we cannot ever again allow the shameful conduct of so many in this country who heaped scorn upon our troops when they returned from Vietnam.

Support our troops!  
And why not?

# Heterosexuals need protection too

Dr. David Axelrod, Governor Cuomo's state health commissioner, announced a decision last week that shocked us. He released a ruling that allows doctors or other medical practitioners who have AIDS to continue to treat patients. Worse yet, Dr. Axelrod ruled that these medical practitioners do not have to inform their patients of their condition.

Dr. Axelrod has, in the past, shown a degree of common sense and professionalism. Governor Cuomo, his boss, has been under attack by the homosexual community for not dedicating more of New York State taxpayers' resources

to help those who have contracted AIDS. We cannot help but wonder if politics did not play a part in this decision. Heterosexuals are not as vocal as the homosexual community, which has developed an organization called Act Up. This organization was responsible for the disruption of mass at Saint Patrick's Cathedral, being celebrated by Cardinal O'Connor, where they screamed out and threw condoms at worshipers. They also interfered with Cuomo's acceptance speech on the night of his re-election to a point where the speech had to be cut short.

Our sensibilities are offended by

Axelrod's decision, but, more importantly, we feel our safety and health is compromised. Why should we be denied the right to have the knowledge that medical practitioners have AIDS and may be putting us at risk?

A dentist in Florida concealed from his patients the fact that he suffered from AIDS. Three patients he served have since contracted the disease, which is of the same strain that his body harbored. It was only upon his death that he revealed, in a letter to his patients, that he knew he had the disease and chose to continue practicing. He asked his patients' understanding. How much

understanding can you have when you are inflicted with a disease that will ruin your life, and take it, in the end?

Patients must have the right to know. Axelrod, as commissioner of health, may have the power to allow doctors to continue to practice medicine and operate when they know they are infected, but we do not believe he has the right or the power to allow those practicing to knowingly keep this information from their patients.

Cuomo claims he does not like to tell his commissioners what to do. In this case, he should tell Axelrod, in no uncertain terms, to reverse his ruling.

And why not?