

WILLMOTT & WHY NOTS

DAVID J. WILLMOTT SR., EDITOR

A World of Thanks

You did it, we did it. We pulled off another exceptional Christmas for children who would not have had one were it not for the efforts of everyone involved with "The Group."

The Group was able to help provide a special Christmas for close to 60 families, which accounted for well over 200 children. Each child received, according to their needs, socks, underwear, shirts, pants, sweaters and warm winter coats.

In addition, we tried to get every child at least one toy or game that he or she had asked for, plus a half-dozen or so smaller ^{to be} ^{Friday} ^{from} which we anticipated would bring much joy.

Each item was individually wrapped, over 3,500 gifts in total. The gifts were marked "From Santa" and, hopefully, the parents claimed the credit for coming through.

The parents do not know who we are or where we come from. We are known simply as "The Group" and outside of the

deliveries and the qualifiers, the recipients' names are not known either.

The Group's efforts start early in November and some of the volunteers put in 12- to 15-hour days. Although none of us is ever present on Christmas morning, we all have visions of the children enjoying what is probably one of the greatest Christmases they will ever have, one where they thought Santa probably would not make it to their house.

In keeping with our decision not to spend any money on administrative costs, we do not send out acknowledgments to the donors or the volunteers. This simple editorial will have to suffice.

We do say, from the bottom of our hearts, thanks for reaching out and helping someone else, because you truly have an understanding of the phrase, "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

May the bread you cast upon the water come back tenfold.

And why not?

No Competition Allowed

Many municipalities throughout Long Island are considering forming their own utility company to escape the grips of the proposed LILCO-LIPA deal. In some of the municipalities, elections have already been held and the voters have approved utility municipalization by 2 to 1 and 3 to 1 margins.

LIPA Chairman Richard Kessel, a few weeks ago, sent out a barrage of publicity releases claiming that competition by municipalities would not be allowed. He claims that the LIPA statute forbids towns or villages from disconnecting from the LILCO service area. This has not been adjudicated in court and a number of attorneys have voiced their opinion that Kessel is wrong and is just blowing more smoke.

If residents of a town or a village want to break away and form their own utilities, why shouldn't they be allowed to?

Kessel claims it would be more costly for them to do this than to remain as part of the LILCO system.

Yet, the upstate town of Massena

Repeal Makes Sense

In one of his last votes as a county legislator, Tom Finlay of Bay Shore introduced a bill that should be a no-brainer. The bill, submitted to the legislature by the county executive, was sponsored by David Bishop of Lindenhurst, and Huntington Legislator Steve Hackeling, who was just voted in as the new presiding officer, jumped on the bandwagon before it was approved.

Apparently, the county executive and the legislature discovered that the Suffolk County Police were spending three dollars for every dollar they were taking in to administer and collect fees for commercial alarm systems.

In Western Suffolk, which is covered by the Suffolk County Police, if an individual or a business installed a burglar or fire

pulled out of Niagara Mohawk to provide municipal electricity for its residents and has enjoyed much lower rates than that utility had provided.

On Long Island, there are two independent municipal utility companies, one in Greenport and the other in Freeport. They have an excellent reliability record and sell electricity at half the cost that LILCO charges.

Kessel's pronouncement, we fear, is an indication of how the company will be run in the future. The company will do everything in its power to stop competition and continue to abuse the ratepayers.

We urge you to write to Governor Pataki, tell him you do not want the LIPA deal. You want the freedom of choice. You want competition. Remind him that he is up for reelection this November. Send your letters to **Governor George Pataki, Executive Chamber, The State Capitol, Albany, NY 12224.**

And why not?

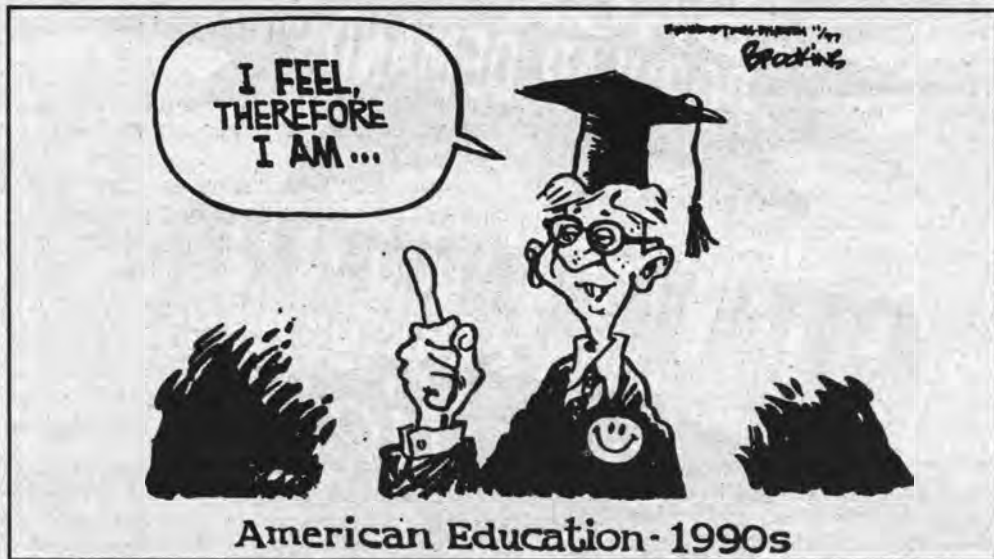
alarm, that person or business had to register with the police. The fee, which is nothing more than a tax for this registration, ranged from \$50 to \$250.

Police officers making over \$100,000 a year were being utilized to process these applications. The total cost of these officers was over \$700,000 per year. The total revenue raised was under \$200,000.

The project was supposed to be a revenue enhancer for the county, but was actually costing taxpayers money. The officers assigned to this bureaucracy could possibly be reassigned to assist in the staffing of the 7th Precinct, which is currently not open due to a lack of manpower.

The legislature and the county executive get an "A" on this issue.

And why not?



Elected Officials Should Not Be Exempt

Joseph Rizzo, the former Presiding Officer of the Suffolk County Legislature recently introduced a bill that will require county decals to be put on non-law enforcement cars assigned to a county worker. This will make these cars visible to the public. Hopefully, it will stop the abuses by some county employees.

We applaud this bill, but also raise a concern that the proposed legislation does not include elected officials or require that decals be put on their cars. "What's good for the goose is good for the gander."

If a legislator or other elected official pulls up at Joe's Bar in a county car, the public should be able to identify it. There is no reason for an exemption other than

another perk they don't need.

Another concern we have with this bill is that it does not call for a penalty or removal of the car if it is found to be used for personal purposes. This should be spelled out with specific alternatives for punishment if an employee is found guilty of abusing his or her vehicle use.

There are approximately 2,684 cars in the county fleet. It is questionable whether all these cars are needed, especially since there have been numerous reports of abuses in the past.

All of us who pay taxes should encourage the passage of this bill, because it will help stop the waste of some of our tax dollars.

And why not?

You Can't Have It Both Ways

Southampton Town officials were recently shocked to learn that a Supreme Court judge had awarded an investor a \$13 million judgment because town action had unjustly prevented him from developing his land.

The judge ruled that the town had stripped the investor of his property value by not allowing the land to be developed according to the planning and zoning laws established by Southampton Town.

This judgment casts a huge shadow over the efforts of every town that has halted development in one way or another under the guise of preserving open space.

It should send shudders down the spines of pine barrens preservation supporters. Essentially, the state and the county have done the same thing as Southampton Town. Both state and county legislation has stripped property owners within the pine barrens of their rights and effectively prevented them from developing or using their properties without just compensation.

The county and state have not bought the properties, and continue to tax them, while denying the owners the right to use the land.

This supreme court ruling is pivotal, but that is not where the issue ends. Southampton Town officials have also been sued by the Group for the South Fork for allowing the development of some lands that this environmental group wants preserved.

Without offering to purchase the 68-acre property or the development rights on the land, the Group for the South Fork has legally objected to a housing project simply because farmland would be developed and, according to the group, a scenic road corridor would now have houses. This lawsuit was filed against the town and project despite the fact that the property is zoned for the preliminarily approved development.

You cannot have it both ways; yet, that is what the extremists on both sides are trying to achieve.

And why not?

Verbeek Takes Stand in His Defense

Hanrahan Confirms Hiring of Private Investigator

By Michael P. Conroy

The New Year has brought the beginning of the end of the trial of Westhampton Beach Village Police Officer Thomas Verbeek as the final two defense witnesses took the stand last week, including the defendant.

First to take the stand on Tuesday, January 6 was Westhampton Police Officer Neil Hanrahan. The defense's lead attorney, Raymond Perini, started his questioning of Hanrahan on the issue of the Police Benevolent Association (PBA) hiring a private investigator to follow both Verbeek and village Trustee James Czachur.

Hanrahan confirmed the PBA hired John Leeson of Amityville for \$1,705 to "prove the relationship between Verbeek and Czachur was more than the two lead people to believe."

Perini asked Hanrahan if the hiring of the private investigator was to discredit Czachur. Hanrahan repeated the hiring of Leeson was to prove the nature of the relationship between the trustee and Verbeek, not to discredit Czachur.

Hanrahan then was asked by Perini if he had asked Quogue Village police officer Jason McMunn to commit perjury on the stand in the first set of



ON THE STAND—Westhampton Police Officer Thomas Verbeek finally took the stand in his own defense last week. (B/RH W128F)

charges brought against Verbeek. "No, I did not," he answered. According to Perini, the first hearing officer's conclusion was that Hanrahan had attempted to coerce McMunn into changing his testimony.

McMunn testified in December that Han-

rahan did attempt to "sway his testimony" in the first set of hearings.

Perini continued with the next set of questions regarding the break-in of Verbeek's police locker in August of 1996. "I did not do it and I do not know who did," said Hanrahan.

Questions then focused on alleged threats Hanrahan made towards other officers in the department over the past few years. Hanrahan admitted he has "threatened" other officers at times; however, he "did not threaten to put a bullet in someone's head."

Perini also questioned Hanrahan regarding an incident in which the police officer was allegedly accused of running over a pedestrian with a squad car. The attorney asked Hanrahan repeatedly why the incident was never investigated. "It was never investigated because it never happened," Hanrahan replied. He added he has never been reprimanded for any threats he ever made to other officers.

The officer also testified he was ordered by police Chief Conrad Teller to report "all actions" of Verbeek that would be considered unbecoming of an officer.

Perini told Hearing Officer Nicholas Campasano, "I am attempting to show that other officers such as Hanrahan have done far worse things and have not been reprimanded or charged as my client has. I am attempting to prove that other officers have been treated differently than my client."

Village Attorney Kevin Kearon did not cross examine Hanrahan.

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PEOPLE Of the Year

From page 1

Suzanne Smith of Cutchogue, with her husband of 30 years, Jeffrey, has raised six children, all of whom have demanded their share of time and attention.

Said her daughter, Christine Smith LoCascio, "Mom has been the Smith taxi driver for the last 20 years, making sure we all got to our part-time jobs, athletic practices, flute lessons, piano lessons, school club meetings, and nine times out of 10, if she is picking up one of her children, she is taking two or three extras who need a ride home."

Smith is currently a preschool teacher's assistant at Our Lady of Mercy, and has for many years devoted her services to the Cutchogue Historical Society and the Cutchogue Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary. As a trustee of the historical society, she has been the "food buyer" and a food preparation volunteer for the past six years for the annual flea market on the Village Green that is the main fund raising event for the preservation of Cutchogue's historical sites.

Over the years she has been involved with Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts, and so many other things that, "It's hard to recall them all," but her longest term involvement has been with the CFDLA. For 28 years, she's served on the committees that organize their annual functions and dinner dances. The most work goes into the fire department's annual chicken dinner, which has grown into a huge event, serving thousands of dinners of such a high caliber that it has attracted the attention of the likes of Martha Stewart.

"It's a four- or five-day project," Smith said. "We're peeling 50 pounds of potatoes each two days ahead of time." Of the mountain of spuds and a truck load of chickens, as well as all the other trimmings, Smith says "Many hands make light work; it's a great time."

One of her life's largest challenge to date was the period of time two years ago when three of her daughters all married within a month of each other. Each had large weddings,

and many might have found all the organizing of food and flowers, dresses and invitations daunting, but with

her upbeat outlook, Smith said, "It was a lot of fun."

Smith related the various snags and horror stories that typically accompany any large production including the third wedding, which was the most fraught. She recounted how her daughter Barbara had ordered a dress from a place in Pennsylvania. A week before the big event, she and her husband drove hours to pick it up, only to find that the dress was ruined, the seed pearls were all falling off the veil, and the shoes weren't dyed. "That started the week from hell," she said. Scouring the local shops, a dress was found at the last minute, and the wedding then proceeded without a hitch.

Her daughter LoCascio said, "My mother is a constant source of strength, compassion and love. She is the woman and mom I aspire to be." Smith's philosophy in the face of all life's challenges is, "You just have to dig in and get it done."

Parent



Kathleen Scholand

The winner of our Parent of the Year award goes to Kathleen Scholand. Kathleen, whose maiden name is Rutkoske, is a native of the North Fork who grew up on a farm in Laurel. Although her husband Greg grew up in Cutchogue, they didn't meet until they'd both gone away to upstate colleges. Kathleen continued her studies at Stony Brook, where she received a master's in mathematics.

Deciding that they loved the North Fork too much to live anywhere else, they moved straight back after graduation and have been living in Mattituck for 13 years. They have two children, Rebecca, 9, and Jared, 7.

A graduate of Mattituck High School,

Kathleen began her 11-year career there teaching regents and algebra classes. "Teaching there is a way of giving back to the school that taught me," she said.

Juggling parenting and a career, as many people are well aware, takes enormous effort. "It's like having two full-time jobs," said Scholand. Her method of coping successfully includes sticking to a highly organized routine. Rising every morning at 5 a.m. takes discipline, but, "I have to. It's the only way to fit everything in," she said.

First on the agenda is transferring last night's laundry load to the dryer. "I try to do a load every day, otherwise it just piles up," she said. Next, any schoolwork such as lesson plans that may need finishing up from the previous evening before waking the children at 6 a.m.

"I'm big on breakfast," she said, "It's important to find family time when we can sit down together, so I like to make a real breakfast like pancakes or French toast as often as I can, although sometimes it's just bagels."

After the day's lessons, Scholand gives extra help to her students, or calls parents to talk about their kids' needs, or just to tell them what a good job he or she is doing. Her own children then come to her classroom to be taken home or to after school lessons via car pool. At home, Scholand fits in a bit of housework before cooking dinner. For her, constant attention to the mess is a survival technique. "I'm a visual person," she said, "and if the house is in order, and our surroundings are peaceful, it helps a lot. It's less stressful."

All this includes attending to three cats and a dog. "The dog has just had surgery," she said, "and needs extra love and attention right now."

Then, helping with homework or reading to the kids before their bedtime, planning school lessons, laundry in machine, and so to bed.

"Some evenings are more hectic than others," she said. "My husband is out a couple of nights a week with things like the Cub Scouts, so I get a little time to myself."

Scholand said that when the children are older, she'd like to get more involved with the

community, but right now, "there is no time. Running the house gives my husband time to help the community, so that's my contribution."

Weekends, Scholand likes to take three-mile walks by herself. "It's my enjoyment," she said.

There are also family projects to be done, the most recent of which was redecorating Rebecca's bedroom. "It does get a little hairy," she confesses. "It's so busy that it's hard to step back, and it's amazing how quickly the time goes."

Her best advice to new parents is to let their kids know that they are loved and cared for unconditionally. She feels that cooking and sitting down for meals, listening to her kids and trying to "create a nice environment," are ways a parent can show they care, but, "even if there's no time, if they know they're loved, they understand and it makes it okay."

Fire/Ambulance



Fred Ogar

All the nominees in the Fire/Ambulance category were long-serving, dedicated people, but Fred C. Ogar of Shelter Island stood out with a lifetime of service to the Shelter Island Fire Department. Born and raised on the island, he has been married for 36 years to his wife Dorothy. They have a daughter, Sharon.

At 62, Ogar has been an active firefighter for 42 years as well as the owner and operator of the Shelter Island Refuse Service Company for 36 years. He was named Shelter Island Fire Department Fireman of the Year in 1972, and his list of accomplishments and service is impressively long.

"After this many years with the department, I've collected enough certificates to wallpaper the wall with," he said. Some high-

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Suffolk's Best

During our monthly executive staff meeting this past October, we discussed how many unsung heroes there are in our county. Every day there are citizens who go out of their way to make Suffolk a better place to live, and they are rarely recognized for their efforts. Out of this meeting came *Suffolk Life's* Person of the Year project.

We expected the project to be a modest proposition that would generate some response and enthusiasm. Were we surprised! Over 4,500 people were nominated from across Suffolk County. 10 towns, citizens brought to our attention the wonderful words and deeds of their neighbors, friends and family. We were overwhelmed by the response, and our news staff had the horrendous task

of picking the finalists.

To the winners and all the nominees, we offer our heartiest congratulations. You gave unselfishly of yourselves and you deserve the recognition that has been bestowed upon you.

It is quite an honor to be chosen by the people around you. We intend to make the Person of the Year contest an annual event, and we encourage our readers to send in nominations during the year. They will be kept and will become part of the entries.

We thank all of those who took the time to nominate their fellow residents and we offer our sincere congratulations to the nominees.

And why not?

Off To A Rocky Start

The Suffolk County Legislature has never been the sanest form of government. Traditionally, the legislators have lacked loyalty, discipline and, sometimes, sensibility. This year's legislature is proving to be no different.

Former Presiding Officer Joseph Rizzo was credited with being one of the better presiding officers (PO). Rizzo offered and developed meaningful legislation and, to his credit, led the legislature in putting up a fight against the proposed LILCO-LIPA deal. He kept politics to a minimum and established a coalition of Republicans and Democrats and focused on good government issues. It was expected that Rizzo would be reelected. His family was even in the audience to see him sworn in.

At the last second, two Republicans abstained and three Republicans from Huntington voted "no." The Democrats voted "no." Rizzo did not have the majority.

On a second vote, Steve Hackeling was nominated and elected by the three Huntington Republicans in a coalition with the Democrats. Steve's not a bad buy. He is bright, young and articulate, somewhat conservative and a bit too arrogant. Hackeling is politically ambitious and saw the

leadership role as a step up the ladder.

The jury is out on his leadership abilities, but on the first order of business, the selection of a deputy, he got off to a rocky start.

The deputy presiding officer's slot was offered to Joseph Rizzo, but he turned it down. It was then offered to Steve Levy, who accepted it. Levy, like Rizzo, had his family in the audience to see him sworn in.

The three Republicans from Huntington voted "yes" but only seven out of the eight Democrats cast affirmative votes. This left Levy shy of one vote. This vote belonged to Maxine Postal. Postal wanted a \$70,000-a-year job for one of her political cronies. She didn't get it, so she refused to vote for Levy.

In the meantime, back at the ranch, the Republicans are smarting about being outsmarted by the Democrats. They have refused to accept any committee chairs and they are expected to block most legislation.

It's going to prove to be a very interesting year. We hope that saner heads will prevail and, somehow, good government can come out of this political mess.

And why not?

Thanks For The Support

We would like to thank the thousands of people who have already renewed their subscriptions with *Suffolk Life*. Our bookkeeping and classified departments have been working overtime to keep up with your requests.

This subscription drive happens every January and we are grateful for those of you who have paid your voluntary \$15 subscription, and those of you who could not pay but have requested that *Suffolk Life* continue to be delivered to your home.

This paper is dedicated to covering the issues that most affect the residents of Suffolk County. Sometimes it is a feature about the community, neighbors or

the government that watches over each of us.

It is an awesome responsibility to advocate the people's voice. Because we have defended the people's rights so staunchly, it has cost this publication considerably, but with your voluntarily subscription renewal or request that the paper continue to be delivered, our goal to be your number one newspaper is enormously reinforced.

Your support will help determine the quantity of news we publish. Plus, it gives you an opportunity to win a weekend for two at the upstate Roseland Ranch Resort, and to win \$1,000 in cash.

And why not?



PSC's Responding To Public Pressure

According to reports in the Wall Street Journal and other daily newspapers across the country, public service commissioners are listening to consumer groups. Most Public Service Commissions (PSC), under deregulation, had ordered rate cuts averaging 10% which were to be phased in over three to four years.

Consumer groups in many states were up in arms and put pressure on their states' PSC to increase the rate cuts and implement them within one to two years.

In Illinois, rates have been cut 15% now and an additional 5% will be cut in the year 2002. In Michigan and some of the other Midwest states, larger decreases were granted to big business. Protesters have been able to get these big cuts for the average homeowner and small businesses.

In California, rates were cut 10% on January 1, but consumer advocates are demanding 25% and will probably get it.

In Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island, rates are expected to decrease by 20% to 25%. Some of the plans are being implemented as this editorial is written.

In New York State, the PSC recently negotiated a deal cutting Con Edison's rates by 10% and Rochester Gas and Electric by 7.5%. These rate reductions are considered just the tip of the iceberg, and for New York State to be competitive, cuts will have to be increased anywhere from 20% to 25%.

Many of these utilities have nuclear power liabilities, but the PSCs in most states are demanding the utilities eat at least 50% of these poor investments. None of the PSCs, except for New York, is considering reimbursing utilities dollar

for dollar for these imprudent financial decisions.

None of the state governments, except for New York, worked out a sweetheart deal like the LIPA bailout of LILCO. Unfortunately, instead of letting market forces establish rates, Governor Pataki has led us down the primrose path with the proposed LIPA deal.

This deal awards LILCO more than dollar for dollar on its Shoreham investment. The deal buys out LILCO's investment in Nine Mile Point 2, another nuclear fiasco. The plan grants LILCO an operating contract to run the T&D (transmission and distribution) for 15 years.

This deal was proposed despite the fact that the staff of the PSC had found that LILCO's costs of operating and maintaining the T&D system were 50% higher than other similar utilities in the Northeast. The PSC staff recommended that LILCO's rates be cut by a minimum of 5.5%. Yet, under the LIPA deal, LILCO's charges to LIPA will be based upon those inflated costs.

There was no competition in the awarding of this contract and there won't be for at least 15 years. Under this deal, Long Island customers will be forced to pay the operating cost of LILCO's power producing system whether we buy any electricity from this system or not. Add to this the \$30 billion debt we will have to pay back and the average LIPA customer will incur a \$60 per month liability before they buy one cent of electricity.

Pataki has let Long Island down. This is his deal, it's his reward to Long Islanders for giving him the plurality to become governor. But this November, Long Island ratepayers will have their say.

And why not?

WILLMOTTS & WHY NOTS

DAVID J. WILLMOTT SR., EDITOR

Are They With Us Or Against Us?

Albany is a great place to hide. It's a good five-hour drive from Suffolk County or a \$300 plane trip. The Long Island state senate and assembly delegation is able to hide from its constituents in this no man's land. But it is time to take the cloak off this Long Island delegation.

The proposed LIPA deal is going to affect our economic well-being for the next 30 years; it imposes a terrible economic burden upon the residents. It's been labeled the worst case scenario by the experts.

The New York State Assembly Committee on Energy has projected that, at best, it will produce 8.9% rate relief by borrowing now and paying later; and there is no guarantee any rate relief will last more than 10 years. The senate has never held hearings or, as far as we know, ever looked into this issue. Our state senate is in lock-step with Governor Pataki, whose aides hatched this deal.

Except for Jim Lack, our state senators (LaValle, Trunzo, Johnson and Marcellino) have been mute. Lack has been outspoken in his support of the Pataki plan. These senators tell us they are our representatives, that they will protect us and look out for our interests. But we believe the Republican delegation representing Suffolk County has become too comfortable and complacent.

If they are not with the people, then

they are against them. If they are not part of the solution, they are part of the problem.

Because Suffolk's state senators have remained mum on the subject, we doubt any one of these distinguished gentlemen has read the details of the deal, yet they are blindly following the orders of the governor.

Our senators are up for reelection this year, along with Governor Pataki. We encourage you to write to them, let them know your feelings on the issue and let it be known that you intend to vote and you will vote for those who have demonstrated their support by their actions, not their rhetoric.

The assembly is also up for reelection. Assemblymen Barraga, Thiele, Harenberg, Sweeney, Englebright and Assemblywoman Mazzarelli have come out opposing the deal.

Since Assemblywoman Acampora, and Assemblymen Wertz, Boyle, Flanagan and Conte have been conspicuous in their silence, we can assume they too are following the governor's orders.

These elected officials need to be contacted by the voters and read the riot act. This is a grassroots fight. It is up to us. We must all do our part. Write, phone, e-mail, voice mail, but make sure they get your message!

And why not?

The following is a listing of our New York State Legislature, addresses and telephone numbers, divided into senators and assembly members.

State Senators

Kenneth P. LaValle (R), 325 Middle Country Road, Suite 4, Selden, NY 11784; 696-6900; fax 696-2307.

James J. Lack (R) New York State Building, Rm. 3B42, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, NY 11788; 360-0490; fax 360-0420.

Caesar Trunzo (R), New York State Office Building, Rm. 3B41, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, NY 11788; 360-3236; fax 360-3386.

Owen H. Johnson (R), 23-24 Argyle Square, Babylon, NY 11702; 669-9200; fax 669-9007.

Carl Marcellino (R), 250 Townsend Square, Oyster Bay, NY 11771; 922-1811; fax 922-1154.

State Assembly Members

Sheldon Silver (D), Speaker of the Assembly, Room 932 LOB, Albany, NY 12248; (518) 455-3791.

Thomas Reynolds (R), Assembly Minority Leader, Room 933 LOB, Albany, NY 12248; (518) 455-3751.

Patricia Acampora (R), County Seat Professional Complex, 1149 Old

Country Rd., Riverhead, NY 11901; 727-1364; fax 369-3869.

Fred Thiele (R), PO Box 3062, Bridgehampton, NY 11932; 537-2583; fax 537-2836.

Debra Mazzarelli (D), 228 Waverly Ave., Patchogue, NY 11772; 447-5393; fax 447-1870.

Steven Englebright (D), 149 Main St., East Setauket, NY 11733; 751-3094; fax 751-3082.

Paul E. Harenberg (D), 1217-2 Montauk Hwy., Oakdale, NY 11769-1434; 589-8685; fax 589-2947.

Robert C. Wertz (R), 50 Route 111, Suite 202, PO Box 668, Smithtown, NY 11787; 724-2929; fax 724-3024.

Thomas F. Barraga (R), 4 Udall Rd., West Islip, NY 11795; 422-1321; fax 422-6085.

Phil Boyle (R), One E. Main St., Suite 219, Bay Shore, NY 11706; 665-0125; fax 665-0231.

John J. Flanagan (R), 75 Woodbine Ave., Northport, NY 11768; 261-4151; fax 261-2992.

James D. Conte (R), 1783 New York Ave., Huntington Station, NY 11746; 271-8025; fax 424-5984.

Robert K. Sweeney (D), 270-B N. Wellwood Ave., Lindenhurst, NY 11757; 957-2087; fax 957-2998.



"YES, IT'S A DISGRACE THAT NO ONE HAS SHUT DOWN THAT HOUSE OF ILL REPUTE AT THE OTHER END OF PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE!... NOW SHOO! WE HAVE PAYING CUSTOMERS ON THE WAY!"

Oh, Those Poor Babies!

According to New York State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, members of the legislature don't even make minimum wage for the hours they work, and he wants us to make up for this shortfall.

But Silver has a little trouble with his math. There are only 8,760 hours in a year. If legislators worked 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year at the minimum wage, they would make \$45,115.

Obviously, the legislators don't work 24 hours a day. Sure, on the final day of the budget process they are there for more than eight hours, but most legislators would be hard-pressed to put in 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year. The legislature is only in session for half the year or less.

Each legislator is paid \$57,500 per year. Also, most members receive additional compensation for heading or serving on committees; this can amount an extra \$30,000 per year.

Furthermore, every member receives \$125 a day while they are in Albany. It doesn't mean they are at work, just that they have checked into the office so they can get another \$125 a day added to their compensation.

Guess who pays for their travel? The taxpayers, of course, whether it is by car, train or plane.

Assembly members often go weeks without doing anything more than going to their office, yet they get paid day in and day out. By definition, the legislature's job is part-time.

Originally, the legislators went up to Albany in January and, within six weeks, had a budget passed and all the bills that were going to be voted on by the middle of February. The legislators were able to go home, run their businesses, plant their fields and lead a normal life.

Today's crowd of overpaid crybabies can't even pass a budget on time. The budget is supposed to be approved by April 1, but last year, the process went on until mid-July.

Of course, this incompetence required the legislature to stay in Albany longer than they were supposed to. Consequently, it cost the taxpayers \$125 a day per legislator, which was a pure waste of money.

The legislature doesn't need a raise, it needs accountability and productivity. Let them convene the legislature on January 1, go back to the old system of completing the schedule within six weeks and disbanding for the remainder of the year. It was done once, it can be done again, particularly with all our modern means and technology for communication.

And why not?

Last Chance To Win \$1,000!

Your subscription renewal form must be postmarked before midnight, January 31 to be eligible to win \$1,000 in Suffolk Life's 1998 Subscription Renewal Contest.

Each January, we ask the readers of Suffolk Life to signify that they want to continue to receive the paper by filling out and sending in the form found on the front page of the paper. You do not have to pay for your renewal, but you do have to indicate that you want the paper to continue to be sent to you.

We do ask those of our readers who can to voluntarily pay for their subscription by sending along a check for \$15 with their renewal request. This helps

defray some of the postage and printing costs. As a reward for sending in your renewal, we offer our readers an opportunity to win a weekend for two at Roseland Ranch Resort, plus the opportunity to win a grand prize of \$1,000 in cash.

In addition, those who voluntarily pay for their subscription are given a free, 15-word classified ad. It's our way of saying thanks for being a supporter of the Suffolk Life family.

Please, whether you voluntarily pay for your subscription or not, send in the form so that we may enter you in the contest.

And why not?