

## Happy Birthday America

What a country this is. A land of freedom, opportunity and greatness and we are fortunate to be part of it.

Unfortunately, most of us have become so accustomed to our national assets that we take them for granted. Let us look at America through a foreigner's eyes: A child in Panama with his distended belly, having only to look at what can be gathered from the land or the sea. A Jew in Russia who wants to practice his religion, but is denied this privilege and forbidden to leave. Through the eyes of a black South African who wishes to work, but is denied a permit because of the color of his skin. A Cambodian family uprooted from the village. Family members separated and segregated, forced to live and work without choice. An Afghan listening to the frightening roar of tanks butchering his village, knowing that the Russians will once

again reduce it to rubble. An Argentine experiencing the price of a loaf of bread going from \$1 to \$2,000 in a period of a year, his cash assets wiped out by inflation.

You can pick the four corners of the earth and you will not find a better country to live in than here, where we have a constitution that allows us to be free in mind, spirit and voice. And an economic system that allows us to work and profit from our labors, a social system that provides for the poor, the needy and the disabled.

What brilliant men our forefathers must have been to write a document, a blueprint of government, that has endured and survived for over two centuries.

We are the lucky ones. Happy Birthday America.

And why not?

## Time For Vision

It is becoming more difficult to handle our welfare problems in Suffolk County. Our current system is choking itself to death. The costs are outlandish, services provided are substandard. A crisis is developing in housing that should never take place.

We handle our social service problems on a piece-meal basis. What is desperately needed today is a comprehensive welfare plan that starts with the concept that those in need of welfare services would best be served by centralizing these people and the services.

A number of years ago we suggested a similar plan to this, the conversion of one of the abandoned mental hospitals to make into a modern, updated social service

complex that would provide good housing, nutrition and health centers, day care, vocational rehabilitation and schooling. A centralized complex of this nature would be a lot less expensive to run and, therefore, could provide more meaningful and better services to those in need.

We currently are out of housing throughout the county for families in need. Services are a hodge-podge, often located long distances from those in need. No one is winning, and we are not meeting our obligations as good citizens.

Isn't it time we started thinking realistically on how best to help our fellowman?

And why not?

## Strike Threat Questions

The on-going Saga of Shoreham has taken a number of new turns in recent days, with upstate politicians stumping in the Senate for passage of a rate increase plan developed by LILCO; a new propaganda campaign launched

by LILCO to counter the opposition against the plant; and still a lot of behind the scenes activity on the federal level that would help push the Shoreham nuclear plant into operation.

While LILCO goes around the county declaring the county is responsible for all its problems, the utility has still to solve the problems with its generators, and gain approval for its own evacuation plan developed after county officials declared a safe evacuation is not possible.

And now a new flaw has developed in LILCO's evacuation proposal which would make use of its own employees to supervise evacuation activities. There's strong talk of a possible strike by LILCO employees in the very near future. The current contract between LILCO and two unions expired on June 30. Negotiations have stalled, and a mediator has been named. The unions want improvements in wages and benefits. The company wants give-backs, including a 5 per cent reduction in salary. Initial reports that a strike would take place when the contract expired were revised last week to indicate the employees would work through the holiday and a decision on a work stoppage would be made within a week.

The talk of a strike raises an interesting question: what happens to LILCO's plan to use its own employees — which has never before been done — if the employees go on strike? William Catacosinos, LILCO's new board chairman, said recently that he felt sure the employees would do the right thing if they were needed for an

evacuation, but we have difficulty picturing angry employees dropping their picket signs to rush to evacuation posts. While evacuation is not a problem now because the plant is not on line, the possibility of a work stoppage could have tremendous impact on an evacuation plan which would depend on employee participation.

When strikes occur, management people generally take on the tasks of employees on the picket line. Would non-trained management people assume responsibility for the operation of Shoreham in the future, if it does go on line. Would their lack of experience in the operation of the plant magnify the possibility of an accident?

While many arguments have been raised about the thought of using utility employees in an evacuation procedure, the word strike has not been included. It should now be, and the NRC licensing board hearing the evacuation issue should carefully consider the ramifications a strike would have.

Public employees, such as police, are covered under the Taylor Law which imposes severe penalties if a work stoppage takes place. Utility employees are not. Serious thought should be given to the possible consequences.

And why not?

## Readers' Opinion

Dear Editor:

New York State's decision to ban large-scale landfilling on Long Island by 1990 was a courageous and environmentally sound one; but this conscious decision to legislate garbage burial out of existence without providing any financial assistance or technical guidance heaps awesome financial and administrative woes upon the towns of Long Island, which must deal with the edict's implications.

Coupled with and related directly to the safeguarding of our precious drinking water supply, charting a sound course for future refuse disposal is the biggest challenge we as Long Islanders face. Lately, it seems all levels of government are willing to tell us how to protect the groundwater, even though we believe we have that situation under control. No one, however, has offered any real guidance to Long Island's towns in this most important matter of refuse disposal. The state has merely instructed us to stop what we are doing and then walked away, leaving the towns with a complex financial and administrative puzzle. On Long Island, we have already seen what disasters can result from forays into unproven technology. None of the existing garbage-to-energy methods have the type of long-standing, proven record of performance which local officials are willing to confidently hang millions of taxpayers' dollars on. The state, in banning continued burial, did not endorse any existing technology, but simply outlawed the one it had previously endorsed.

And were an obviously successful and dependable garbage-to-energy technology readily available, local officials would still be left with the unenviable task of deciding where these plants should be located, in the face of inevitable local opposition. Again, where is the State of New York when it comes to helping to solve the problems this state legislation presents?

The state seems content now to sit back on this issue and periodically prod local towns to show some movement towards the closing of landfills and development of an alternative to land burial. While high-ranking state officials may feel this role fulfills the state's obligation in this matter, it

clearly does not.

Long Island's towns are faced with a wide range of iffy alternatives to landfilling, most of which are unproven, and have seen local examples of what can happen when due deliberation leads to the wrong decisions.

The financial implications of these projects are staggering, and deciding where to locate a trash-to-energy plant will be difficult to impossible for officials on the local governmental level, where local opposition to these decisions is both vehement and effective.

The situation cries out for an increased role by the state in dealing with the impact of this law.

To deal forthrightly with so large an issue, which clearly transcends political boundaries, I join Commissioner George Kopp of the South Huntington Water District in his call upon the governor to appoint a bipartisan commission to deal with the problem of siting garbage-to-energy plants. This appointed body would search out prospective locations in Nassau and Suffolk, study them, and come up with a list of sites deemed acceptable for resource recovery.

This type of decision-making mechanism would take untold pressure off local officials already burdened with awesome financial implications and the choice of a variety of chancy solutions to the technological problems with resource recovery.

The State of New York has mandated that landfills be closed by 1990, based on sound environmental theory. Let the state take a leadership role, as well, in helping Long Island's towns deal with this edict and its multitude of implications. The effects of the decisions to be made here will be felt for many decades. It would seem that the on-going deliberations and the entire decision-making process deserve much more serious attention from state officials, who promulgated the landfill ban. Let's all work together to solve this problem, and make sure it does not get the best of us.

Sincerely,  
**Donald W. Zimmer**  
Councillman  
Town of Brookhaven

## SUFFOLK LIFE

NEWSPAPERS

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## The Prince and The Pawns

In January your scribe warned that a plot had been hatched in the County of Suffering between Prince Peter, and Maestro Mike, to suck out of the peasants another 1/4 per cent in sales tax to bail out the fiscal irresponsibility in the County of Suffering.

The cornerstones of the conspiracy were the spineless pawns who inhabit the Great Hall of Unreality that the Prince and the Maestro knew they could control because they were only pawns and could be made to fall into line like good little boys and girls.

The conspiracy involved a deal made with a fink who controlled the State Assembly but was of an opposing persuasion. What they had to give for what they got your scribe has not been

able to ascertain. But, his fertile imagination can conjure up all kinds of interesting scenarios.

The fink delivered and now the Prince and the Maestro have only the spineless pawns in the Great Hall of Unreality to deal with. They have these little soldiers all stacked up. But what would happen if one or two of them decided they didn't want to be pawns any longer and marched to their own drummer? Would the Prince and the Maestro's plan fall apart like a house of cards built without a foundation?

Who knows, this is a strange world. Sometimes, mice become men and pawns become statesmen.

And why not?

## The One That Didn't Slip Through

The New York State Teacher Union almost slipped through a bill that would have given tax credits to employers who hired school teachers during the summer.

The bill passed both the Assembly and the Senate, but was vetoed by Governor Cuomo. Congratulations Mario, you are full of surprises.

Can you imagine the gall of those teachers? They are not exactly the lowest paid employees in the State of New York. On an hourly basis, most cost the district they work in well over \$30 per hour. They are not what you might call the disadvantaged, in need of special legislation to make it attractive to hire them when they are off on vacation during the summer.

Tax credits are a legitimate means of encouraging employers to hire the unemployable, the disadvantaged, those in legitimate need of employment. Most school teachers are paid on a twelve month basis for working 180 days a year. Their income keeps rolling in even when they are off for the summer.

Jobs many teachers take during the summer are often jobs needed by kids in school or part-time workers who legitimately must supplement the family's income.

Cuomo will earn the wrath of the teacher union for vetoing this "pet" special legislation, but he has earned the respect of the people.

And why not?

## Competing Bureaucracies

Controversy continues over petitions which seek a public referendum on the proposed abolishment of the Suffolk County Legislature, to be replaced by a Board of Supervisors with a weighted vote. Those petitions are still stuck in committee, stalled there by legislators who, for obvious reasons, are opposed to the move.

The shame of the matter is the fact that unless the proposal makes its way to the ballot, it is unlikely to be fully debated so that all the pros and cons of the legislature vs. the Board of Supervisors can be aired. While much of the reason for the abolishment movement is the legislature itself — for very good reason — the frustration

which has given birth to this proposal stems far deeper than the individuals who fill the seats.

The current county — local government system works very poorly here in Suffolk county because of the power struggle that seems to exist between county and local agencies and officials. There's more of an "us" and "them" spirit that prevails than the cooperative, working together attitude that should be in place. Too often our county officials seem to forget that they represent the same people that the local officials do. When towns find it necessary to launch law suits against the county because of actions taken by the county, what you have is the same people paying the legal bills on each side of the issue.

A case in point: Brookhaven Town has launched a suit against the county's Board of Health for their insistence in granting permits for "boarding houses" even though those facilities may not be situated in a legal zoning category. One would think that the Board of Health people would, when a permit request is received, first check with the town to see if the proposed boarding house has the required zoning to operate. It doesn't happen that way. There simply isn't that kind of cooperation, even though town officials have requested the county level to extend that courtesy.

What happens, of course, is that a number of facilities not properly zoned multiple-family use spring up throughout the town. In many cases these boarding houses become a blight on the neighborhood, the subject of complaint, and, consequently, the target of legal action by the town to force compliance with its zoning regulations.

Other towns have also found it necessary to launch law suits against other county agencies for such things as "welfare dumping" and a host of other non-cooperative actions by county officials and agencies. In most instances the legal action follows repeated, but unsuccessful, efforts to resolve the matters in a cooperative

fashion.

Ideally, it would be a better idea to abolish the county, going back to town governments as has been accomplished in Connecticut. A lot of money could be saved through the elimination of duplication in services, the abolition of another level of patronage, and the silly games that have been played on the county level.

If the county legislature as it is currently established was so good and efficient, the attitude problems that exist between the county and local governments would not be happening. If our esteemed legislators were so much better able to handle the problems, we wouldn't have so many problems.

We are all one people, but we are governed by too many competing levels of bureaucracy. County Executive Peter Cohalan, when he was a town supervisor, used to be fond of saying, "The best form of government is that which is closest to the people." What he said then is still true. The only problem is he forgot to take that truth with him when he assumed his county post.

In their efforts to block the move to give the public an opportunity to decide which form of government they want, our legislators are perpetuating the notion that the county people know best what the local people need. They want to save their jobs, pure and simple. If that action was predicated on a desire to make county government work hand in hand with local officials for the benefit of the people, it might be excusable. But the problems we face are the result of the lack of action by our county legislators, the very same people who declare, "We can do it better." History shows they can't. Or won't.

That leads only one alternative for those unhappy with the legislators we now have. Start now, immediately, with a drive to replace them with people that really care, who will bring good government closer to the people, at a lower cost.

And why not?

## Readers' Opinion

To the Editor:

This letter is in response to a letter in this weeks paper, in the "letters to the editor" column. It was an open letter to the landlords of Suffolk County.

Dear Mr. Cipolla:

Your appeal to landlords to lower rents is misdirected. Landlords are in effect small businessmen, and tenants are the customers. Like many things we all buy, rents are determined by market forces. You wouldn't ask an oil company or supermarket chain to lower prices because they create a hardship, so why ask a landlord?

A landlord that doesn't maintain rents near market value is not covering his expenses, and getting a reasonable return on his investment. What is a reasonable return? If he can park his money in a money fund and get a 10 per cent return, he certainly is entitled to far more than that for handling all the problems attendant with managing a rental unit.

The living conditions you describe are indeed disgraceful, however rents charged by landlords are not the problem. They are just symptoms of a much larger problem, the inflationary high interest times we are living in.

Sincerely,  
John Bull

Dear Mr. Willmott:

Your front page story, "Give LILCO \$281 Million" seems erroneous to me in the fact that Mr. Chartuk states, "If granted this hike consumers will have to pay about 13.5 per cent more for electricity, boosting an average Long Island electric bill to about \$80 per month."

Please note the enclosed photocopy budget bill from LILCO for my oil fired hot air heated, no-air-conditioning house, which currently runs \$83 before any increase.

Sincerely yours,  
Catharine Black  
Shelter Island

Editor's Note: The "average bill" figure was supplied by PSC Administrative Judge Frank Robinson, who recommended the increase.

Gentlemen:

I appreciate finding your great little paper in my mailbox, and hope it will continue to be sent.

For part-time help and local news and sales it is the best.

Thanks,  
Mrs. L. F. Gregory  
Riverhead

# SUFFOLK LIFE

VOL. 23 NO. 46

NEWSPAPERS

and Suffolk County Life

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## Political Vengeance

Suffolk County Executive Peter Cohalan recently successfully molded a coalition of Republicans and Democrats in an attempt to impose a one-quarter cent sales tax increase on residents of Suffolk County.

Allegedly the one-quarter cent increase would be used to bail out the Southwest Sewer District. While some of the funds raised through that increase might well be used for the sewer district, we believe they will also be utilized to bail out Cohalan from the disastrous contract he signed with the C.S.E.A. workers, as well as other items of fiscal mismanagement brought about by the County Legislature, his administration, and the past administration.

It's one thing to form a coalition to pass necessary, unpopular legislation. It's another to use this coalition to force people onto your bandwagon by denying them their ability to perform as representatives of the people who elected them.

It has been alleged that one of Cohalan's aides recently warned Legislator Wayne Prospect, who has been one of the legislative leaders opposed to the Shoreham nuclear plant, that opposition to the sales tax proposal might cause the county to reconsider, because of fiscal problems, and curtail hiring consultants and attorneys in the fight against the Shoreham plant. Cohalan's saving grace has been his steadfast conviction that the safety of the people must come before corporate profits. We can't imagine he would ever consider violating this sacred trust the people have placed in him for monetary or political gain.

We suspect some of his aides, who are known for their zealousness in playing hardball, have stepped off the plate and are acting on their own. Some things you bluff with, some things you don't.

There isn't a person in Suffolk County that is not concerned about the Southwest Sewer District and the plight of its taxpayers. We know these sewer district taxpayers were conned and deliberately lied to. They were, though, the only ones that were given an opportunity to express an opinion about the sewer district. It's perfectly true that they were told the district was estimated to cost no more than a quarter of a billion dollars. Its final cost will be four to five times the original estimate.

Originally they were told there would be an insignificant increase in taxes. As the politicians caused the cost to soar through their greed and corruption, John Klein, then county executive foolishly pledged that the rate would not increase more than 64 cents per \$100. Klein made this as a political promise without any substance or fact.

Cohalan has been attempting to honor this pledge. We have applauded his efforts for leverage leasing, refinancing and other programs he has attempted to put into place. We find contemptible, however, his renegeing on his word and promises and his efforts now to make all the taxpayers

within the county pay for the sewer district, which is only a special use district that logically should not be charged to all taxpayers.

We further seriously question whether the monies that would be raised by the sales tax would all go to the sewer district. We all too well remember Rockefeller telling us as citizens, "Let me develop a lottery system for the State of New York and all profits and proceeds will go to education." We believed that promise too, and the money went into the general fund and has been spent at will.

Cohalan further promises that if the county is allowed to increase the sales tax by 1/4 cent, the sales tax increase will only last for five years. Believe that, and you are the most gullible person in the world. Once a politician gets a tax in place, you are not going to get him to voluntarily rescind it. Nassau County's efforts to extend its sales tax is a prime example.

The day has come for statesmanship in the County of Suffolk. We doubt that the players are up to it, but they should at least give it a good, old-fashioned try. A solution must be found to stabilize the tax rate in the Southwest Sewer District without adding to the tax burden of the citizens who are not benefiting from the service.

Playing politics by vengeance, and negotiating by blackmail is not going to win any friends or influence anyone but cowards.

Cohalan was elected to serve all the people in the county, not just his political cronies from Babylon and Islip.

Legislators were elected to first serve their district constituents, that is their first and foremost obligation. They were not elected to take the money out of their constituents' taxes and redistribute it into the stronghold of Republicanism, Babylon.

As my Dad said, if you are going to play hard ball you better wear a well padded mitt. Peter's day of playing hardball may be coming to a rapid end, and we doubt he has enough callouses to catch a ball on his own without the mitts that he has had available in the past.

And why not?

Pork barrels are special enactments created during an election year to make it appear to the folks back home that their local congressman has been working. These special projects are usually in the field of public works, and, most times, of dubious value.

Every once in a while, however, one of these projects is not only necessary but vital to the congressman's district. So it was with the dredging of the Shinnecock Inlet. Congressman William Carney was able to get an appropriation from the federal government to correct what had become a life-threatening situation to mariners. This situation was not new. Carney had been pressured since he has been in congress to get the federal government and the Corps of Army Engineers to dredge this vital link to the inland waterway.

The wives of the Shinnecock commercial fishermen had mounted an intense campaign for this necessary dredging. A hearing was held at which Carney primped and preened himself. Within days after the hearing, Carney announced with great fanfare that he had delivered for the district. He had arranged for a dredge that would correct this situation. He had managed to get federal funds for a federal project to benefit his district. Carney pounded on his chest, sent out a flood of news releases, posed for pictures, had brochures printed at taxpayers' expense, that were then distributed at taxpayers' expense, extolling what a wonderful, effective congressman he had all of a sudden become. He delivered on this life and death issue,

he declared.

The dredge arrived, to the relief of fishermen and their spouses who must travel this inlet on a daily basis in treacherous seas. Recreational mariners lined the inlet watching the dredge. There was talk of 15 to 20 foot depths of water in the mouth of the inlet and where the sand bar was outside. The dredge left, but the pork barrel burped.

The mouth of the inlet had been cleared, but the east sandbar was left intact. After spending a lot of time inside the inlet clearing away shoals there, the dredge left before it could do an adequate job of clearing away the sand bar on the outside, where the most serious problem exists. The dangerous conditions that prompted the expressions of concern still exist.

Fishermen and all other mariners are still in a life-threatening situation. The taxpayers are out over \$600,000 when federal, state and local contributions are tallied. The bar is still in existence with as little as three feet of water above the treacherous shoal, lurking and waiting to cause a ship to go to a watery grave.

Where is the strong, eloquent voice of Congressman Bill Carney? Where is his conservative indignation about wasted taxpayers' funds.

We can see the pile of political bull. We hear it burp. We smell the odor, but the congressman who patted himself so enthusiastically on his own back is nowhere in sight.

Will Bill "Burp" Carney ever reappear?

And why not?

## Women Sold Out

Men are still playing politics with women's lives. There are a number of women who because of their qualifications, their work experience and their records of public service, would make ideal Presidential candidates, or as in this case, a Vice-Presidential candidate.

The selection of Geraldine Ferraro as the Vice-Presidential candidate of the Democratic party is a raging insult at the strides women have made over the years. A political unknown with virtually no administrative experience, a limited congressional history and almost no national recognition has been chosen as Walter Mondale's running mate.

If men wanted to sincerely give women a shot at the Presidency or

Vice-Presidency, why did they not pick the most qualified woman with the least amount of liabilities to be the pioneer? Why pick a political unknown with so little experience and exposure, and tie her to a political reject?

If I was a woman I would be incensed and infuriated. There is no reason why a woman should be denied an opportunity of becoming Vice-President or President because of her sex. By the same token, a woman should not be a sacrificial lamb, because of the lack of her qualifications, just because she is a woman.

Women have worked too darn hard and come too darn far to settle for political abuse.

And why not?

## Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

In concern to the matter of Skills Unlimited in Oakdale.

I feel the outcome is a wise decision for all concerned. To keep all of these people contained in one place is not wise. For all supervision is a must for the sake of the community and the clients safety as well.

A point not brought out into the open is a portion of these people are referred there by psychiatric institutions (a place where all dignity is taken away, and overly medicated). Two points which should be made public issues—the care, treatment and post-care of the mentally ill.

Then placed as clients in skills as a stepping stone to lead a normal productive life once again. Even so more rewarding and productive than the non-ill.

Robin Galeano

## SUFFOLK LIFE

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## Here We Go Again!

It appears LILCO will never learn from its mistakes.

Back in the late 60's, prior to construction, LILCO and its attorneys argued that the question of evacuation should not be considered until the plant was built and the operating licenses were to be sought. If the question of evacuation had been addressed prior to construction permits being issued, the company might have been saved from the \$4 billion mistake that Shoreham has become.

But LILCO was cocky and felt that the evacuation question would never pose a problem. Even if it did, LILCO management apparently decided it would be able to ram through its license regardless of whether the people would be safe from the plant's possible ill effects.

We were amazed reading a recent testimony given at an N.R.C. hearing by LILCO's attorneys regarding the employees strike. The county raised the question of the effects the current strike would have on the lighting company's L.E.R.O. plan. The county contends that LILCO could not depend upon the striking employees to assume positions in an evacuation procedure in case of an emergency.

LILCO responded it probably would not run the plant if there was a strike. Most revealing though was the company's insistence that the question of whether the striking employees would respond to an emergency should not be considered at this time. The company contends this issue should not be addressed until after the plant has been run at low power, which means, of course, the plant and fuel would be contaminated.

Of course, this is the same logic that got LILCO so deeply into trouble in the first place. The time to address possible scenarios is before they happen. It makes no sense to put off addressing the question of whether LILCO's plan would work or contemplating whether the striking employees of LILCO would respond to the company's demands that they take part in an evacuation.

We have questioned all along whether LILCO employees would react

any differently than any other citizen. Would they knowingly stay in an area if an accident happened? Would they respond first to their families' needs and, once out of the area, not come back?

Morale has never been lower at LILCO. The employees hold management in absolute contempt. They know as well as all others know that the financial dilemma the company is in is the result of incompetent management and bad decisions. Many of LILCO's workers have already been laid off, others have taken cuts in pay as they were bumped down the line. The workers offered to continue under their present salaries, asking no increase. Management refused this offer, which resulted in the strike.

What is galling LILCO employees most is that the top management, which is responsible for the financial dilemma the corporation is in, has protected its own interest and its salaries. Catacosinos, the current head of LILCO, was hired at a salary of \$275,000. In a phony gesture he reduced his salary to \$220,000, only \$10,000 less than former chairman Charles Pierce before he resigned. On top of this lucrative salary, he negotiated a contract giving himself a \$600,000 golden parachute, whether the company succeeds or fails.

The whole LILCO situation is a tragedy. The company had an excellent work force, dedicated people who cared about the customer. They are being made now to suffer for mistakes they didn't make, for bad management decisions by the very same people who continue to personally prosper. Without its workers it cannot survive very long. Without its workers it does not have an evacuation plan. Without a plan, Shoreham is dead. But still the arrogance at LILCO, at the top management level, persists.

We hope the N.R.C. has the good common sense to address the question of whether striking employees can be counted on in the time of an emergency. Now is the time for the answers, not when the sirens are blown.

And why not?

## When Asked, Please Give

This month, most of Suffolk County's volunteer fire departments and ambulance corps are holding fundraisers which take the form of direct mail appeals, house-to-house solicitation, barbecues, carnivals or bazaars. Whatever form, please go out of your way to support it.

Fire and ambulance services are integral and important to our quality of life. In most cases, the equipment used is paid for through special district taxes. The people, however, who operate the equipment and perform the services are volunteers. They are your neighbors, your co-workers, your friends. To become members of a department these volunteers must put in hundreds of hours of training. They must become skilled in responding to emergencies like a pro, and have the necessary skills to save lives and property.

Not only do the volunteers use a great deal of their free time, a sacrifice few of us wish to make, but their families lose the companionship and the services of their spouses during not only training, but emergency calls. When the beepers go off or the sirens

sound, no matter what activity these volunteers are engaged in, they drop what they are doing and come to the aid of their neighbors and the community.

They receive not one cent in direct compensation for being on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Once a year these volunteers go to the community and ask for donations. These donations, in large part, show the appreciation and the respect the community has for its own.

The funds raised are used for community, social and welfare needs of the departments, to fund items that are not built into the tax rate.

We encourage every resident, every business, to dig as deep as they can and give as big a contribution as possible. Even if you are on a limited budget, and can only afford a dollar or two, donate it. Enclose a little note expressing your appreciation for the services these men and women give to their community.

These volunteers deserve every bit of credit we can give them. They have earned it by putting service above self. And why not?

## An opposing view

# 'Sales tax hike for sewers only'

Dear Dave:

I hope that you will allow me to correct some incorrect statements made in your most recent editorial concerning my plan to bail out the financially troubled Southwest Sewer District through a temporary 1/4 of one penny increase in the sales tax.

You claim, incorrectly, that the revenue generated from the 1/4 of one cent increase in the sales tax would be utilized to "bail out Cohalan from the disastrous contract he signed with the CSEA workers, as well as other items of fiscal mismanagement brought about by the County Legislature, his administration, and the past administration."

Nothing can be further from the truth. The legislation which was passed in Albany, a copy of which I have enclosed for your review, specifically provides that the revenue generated by the 1/4 cent increase be put into a special Sewer District Stabilization Fund. By law, the monies can be used for no other purpose than to assist the Southwest Sewer District and every other county, town and village sewer district in Suffolk County.

When the bill was reviewed by the staff of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee, they agreed that there was no attempt being made to use this revenue for other purposes. That is why, I insisted, in the first place, that the increase be limited to 1/4 of one penny. Had I asked for more, then you would have had a legitimate right to raise the question. There is not one fiscal expert in the county who would agree with your contention that the 1/4 of one penny increase is going to be used to solve other budgetary problems.

You also state, incorrectly, that the 1/4 of one cent tax will go on forever, not just for the five years in my plan. If you read the bill passed in Albany you will see that the tax would begin on December 1, 1984 and end on November 30, 1989. I have no intention of extending the tax beyond the five year period and I must remind you that Nassau's tax increase had to do with a

budget miscalculation of their own making and cannot be thought of in the same manner as the Suffolk proposal.

Dave, you know full well that I have tried since the beginning of my administration to seek solutions to the financial problems of the Southwest Sewer District from within the district itself. That's why, in 1981, I advanced the concept of creating an Authority to refinance that debt and, in 1982, I began work on the leverage-lease plan. Unfortunately, neither of these ideas were implemented, and now the time of reckoning has come.

I did not create the problems we are facing. You did not create the problems we are facing. They were created by a previous administration and left for me to solve.

The sale tax plan was advanced by me in March. At that time, I said that I would be willing to listen to alternatives. The truth is that there has not been one other plan advanced that has been able to stand up under scrutiny. The Smith-Barney plan, championed by anti-sales legislators, fell flat on its face in Albany.

Assembly Speaker Stanley Fink put the whole matter into perspective when he made his decision on the issue. He said, "Today, I decided to stop looking at this from a political point of view and weigh it on the merits." The Speaker felt, as I do, that the sales tax plan is a reasonable solution to a countywide problem.

I hope you will print this letter so that your readers will have the benefit of my views on this issue.

Sincerely,  
PETER F. COHALAN  
SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE

P.S. The sales tax concept has been endorsed by two independent and highly respected fiscal experts—Donald Gruen, Director of the Legislative Office of Budget Review and Suffolk County Comptroller Joseph Caputo—because it's the right thing to do.

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