

'No Guts for Cuts' coalition

The horrible stench of raw, decayed politics drifted through Suffolk County last week, in the wake of action taken by a coalition of Republicans, Democrats and County Executive Robert Gaffney. Only five members of the Suffolk County Legislature stood firm against the political maneuvering which resulted in approval for a \$91 million deficit borrowing plan, and a one-half cent increase in the county's sales tax.

Just the day before, the same two proposals went down to a resounding defeat, as did proposals for salary reductions for county employees and other proposed cuts. Then the wheeling and dealing began. The end result was the creation of a crisis coalition of legislators, Democrats, Republicans and Conservatives, who agreed to vote as a block.

Suffolk County Executive Robert Gaffney called the 11-member coalition a "new era of cooperation." And added: "We are foregoing politics in favor of good government." What he didn't say was that he had to sweeten the pot with political promises—such as committee assignments and chairmanships, changes in legislative rules, a softening of his stance of opposition to the purchase of Robins Island. Those who changed their votes from a "no" on Wednesday to a "yes" on Thursday did not do so on the merits

of the issue. The merits were the same Wednesday as they were Thursday. The political promises made the difference.

This is one of the times we hate being an editor or publisher. Last year we encouraged you to support Robert Gaffney for county executive. His opponent, Pat Halpin, had shown us he could not manage. Gaffney gave hope, particularly by his expressed realization of the financial mess the county was in, the incredibly hard job that the new county executive would have, and his avowed willingness to be a one-term county executive. He said he knew the next county executive would have to do the unpopular things necessary to bring the county's finances under control, and would pay the political price as a result.

We thought Gaffney was the right man for the job. We were wrong.

Gaffney flopped 100 percent last week. After six months of trying to bring some sense to Suffolk finances, he gave up. He formed and joined a coalition of weak-kneed legislators who insisted on increasing your taxes, but refused to cut back on expenses. Gaffney showed no leadership in dealing with the problem. Although he scorned the Democrats initially, insisting he would work within his own party, in the end he failed. He had to rely on wheeling and dealing, and po-

litical threats, and backed off on promises he made to the people to get elected.

It is basically the members of this coalition who got us into the trouble we are in. John Foley (D-Patchogue) never saw a need he didn't want to spend your money on. Mike D'Andre (R-Smithtown) flops whatever way the popular winds blows. Rose Caracappa (C-Selden) will fight with her dying breath to do the bidding of the unions, no matter how much it costs the taxpayer or how unfair it is. Newcomer Nora Bredes (D-Stony Brook) is reported to have bargained with Gaffney for a softening of his opposition to the purchase of Robins Island. Gaffney said he would "consider it," to purchase her vote. Also, Sondra Bachety, more interested in protecting her own than the taxpayers. Herb Davis (R-Shirley), who is the cops' rah-rah boy. Rich Schaffer (D-Lindenhurst), who you can always count on being at the bottom of any slimy deal to gouge the taxpayer. Mike O'Donohoe (C-Northport), who probably believes the taxpayers will be relieved to ship him off to Washington to get rid of him. Maxine Postal (D-Amithville), who would quit before she would say yes to cutting expenses. Jim Gaughran (D-Huntington), who, at election times, professes Conservative rhetoric but has never seen the need to cut expenses or taxes. Don Blydenburgh (R-Smithtown), the presiding officer of the legislature, is the biggest disappointment. For six months he fought with his peers on the legislature and the county executive for tax cuts. But at the 11th hour, he melted like a marshmallow. He told Suffolk Life recently he refused to support deficit financing because he feared Gaffney would not come up with cuts if he got approval to borrow \$91 million to resolve the crisis. Thursday he went for the financing but no cuts. So much for the courage of his convictions.

The coalition was dubbed last week the "No Guts for Cuts" group. An appropriate name.

The legislators who refused to go along with the deficit financing and sales tax increase insisted there should

be cuts in spending as well. They have been targeted by the political powers, and will undoubtedly be the subjects of scorn and retaliation by their "No Guts for Cuts" peers. But Allan Binder (R-Dix Hills), Michael Caracciolo (R-Wading River), Thomas Finlay (R-Brentwood), Rick Lazio (R-West Islip), Steven Levy (D-Holbrook) and Joseph Rizzo (R-East Islip) deserve the applause of the taxpayers for their courage to stand firm. While William Jones (R-Sag Harbor) did not join the coalition, he went along with the "No Guts for Cuts" crew in favor of the tax hike and borrowing measure.

The sad fact is the new sales tax proposal will not overcome the deficit. We are too far in debt. The deficit borrowing will only add to the tax burden this year and for the next 10 years.

The county executive and his new coalition members are overestimating the real amount of money that will be raised. The shortfall will flow over into next year.

And the deficit problem next year will be much worse than it is in 1992. It has already been projected that the county will face a deficit of \$118 million in 1993. This figure was projected by the county and was based on the premise of spending cuts and one-shot revenue products that most likely may never be realized. What happens then? Another borrowing plan? Another sales tax increase? Property tax hikes? With the "No Guts for Cuts" and spend like it is going out of style crew in control of Suffolk County, the 1993 deficit could easily swell to a quarter of a billion dollars.

We're in trouble, folks, big trouble. With the kind of fiscal mismanagement we witnessed last week, our homes won't be worth the ground they are built upon. The tax burden will be too high for continued ownership. You think values are depressed now? Just wait until next year.

Hopefully our Albany legislators will show more courage than did the new coalition members, and refuse to go along with the scam until cuts accompany the plan.

And why not?

Still no law!

Three years ago this weekend, a young man by the name of John Connelly was at a house party when a mortar-type device, packed in a pipe and a cinderblock, was set off. The explosion sent debris flying. Although he was 30 feet away, Connelly was hit by some of the debris and his chest was torn apart.

His mother, Anita Benson, was the 911 operator on the phone that night when the call came through for help. Little did she suspect that it was her son's emergency she was responding to.

The next day she called my office at Suffolk Life. It was well after hours. She was surprised to find me here, just as I was surprised to find myself talking to a very calm, determined mother who had just lost her son. She wanted help, not to bring her son back but to stop other mothers' sons from being needlessly killed. She wanted a law passed that would make it a felony to possess or sell fireworks of class four classification. These explosive devices typically could be described as those containing at least a quarter-pound or more of dynamite. She didn't care about the sparklers or the Chinese firecrackers, or any of the other fireworks that, although illegal, are commonly used. The misdemeanor penalties associated with them would suffice. She wanted to take "weapons of death" off the streets. This seemed reasonable and logical. Who could be opposed to it?

For two years the bill was introduced in the State Legislature. The

only objection came from an obscure out-of-state fireworks association. Yet, for two years this bill was never voted upon and died each session.

A very distraught woman came into my office last summer, a beaten woman who the system had consumed. "I give up, I am fighting powers too big." We consoled her and promised we would keep putting pressures on where we could. She left dejected.

This year, as we approach the Fourth of July, her personal agony will be relieved. Her public defeat on a proposal that was right for the right reasons will remain the disgrace of the New York State Legislature, which failed to protect the people it was elected to serve. Only those in the New York State Legislature, your assemblymen and your senators, know why this bill which seemed so right, had so little objection, could do so much good, never got out of committee.

Chances are almost nil that these members will hold their child with their bloody and blown apart body in their arms. They won't have to look into their face and say, "I failed you." But other good citizens of New York may, unfortunately, one day find themselves in that position.

When that happens, and it will almost surely occur, the blame will fall upon the shoulders of our legislators who failed this very sound bill of protection. The blame, and the shame.

And why not?

Happy Fourth of July

Few Americans really know the true meaning of the word freedom. We have never lived in an oppressive land. Never have we suffered under a dictatorship, which gags the press, the voice and the mind. We don't know what it is to read, hear or see only one side of a story. We do not have to fear that "big brother" is looking over our shoulder when we vote, or routinely monitoring our voices or conversations.

We have not lived in a country where we were told we will be a doctor or engineer or, by fiat, a painter or plumber or a garbage man. We have the freedom to choose the number of children we

will have. We have no state edicts that say you will have an abortion after two children.

These are just a few of the freedoms we never think about because we have never been denied. Our Constitution, our Bill of Rights, are our guarantee to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This is what we celebrate this Independence Day.

We each should personally think about these wonderful documents, our freedom and what we are doing to maintain it, as our forefathers created it, in this year of 1992.

And why not?

Can you afford 100% tax increase?

If you live in Suffolk County you have the power to determine how much of an increase in real estate, sales and use taxes you want to put up with. Your county government is not only broke, it's bankrupt.

Current projections indicate the county will be \$91 million in the red by December 31. We predict that figure will be over \$100 million. Current predictions indicate a 1993 deficit of about \$98 million, but we would not be surprised if that figure grows to \$250 million by the end of the year because the lower figure is based upon one-shots and overestimation of revenues that will not be realized.

This red ink must be either stopped or made up by you through higher taxes. It can only be resolved by cutting the size and the cost of government, or raising taxes.

County Executive Robert Gaffney and his gang of "no guts for cuts" county legislators who have made up an unholy alliance want to keep government as it is, raise the county portion of the sales tax by 12 percent, bringing the sales tax to eight and one-half percent. They want to borrow up to \$91 million

to try to plug the leaks. They want to pay this borrowed money back over the next three years through increased real estate taxes which would double if over-spending continues unabated. This extended borrowing will cost millions more in interest. The one thing they don't want to do is cut the size of government or cut the cost of government. They have gone to Albany with hat in hand, asking for permission to raise the sales tax and to borrow against tomorrow to pay for today's obesity.

Six who stood firm

There are six legislators who refuse to go along with this scandalous scheme. They are: Legislators Alan Binder (D-Dix Hills); Michael Caracciolo (R-Wading River); Thomas Finlay (R-Brentwood); Rick Lazio (R-West Islip); Steven Levy (D-Holbrook), Joseph Rizzo (R-East Islip). William Jones (R-Sag Harbor) has not joined the coalition, but did vote for the deficit financing and sales tax increase.

The six legislators declared they could not vote for any tax increase or any deficit borrowing until the county executive and his "no guts for cuts" unholy alliance agree to spending reduc-

tions. And this past week they did more. They not only talked about cuts, they came up with concrete proposals. They have rolled out a smorgasbord of spending reductions that hurt everyone, but bring some financial sanity back to this county. A list of these proposed cuts is detailed elsewhere in this edition.

Included in their plan is an item they would rather not support . . . the increased sales tax. But they reasoned that this late in the year, without some increase in revenues, the deficit was simply too large to handle with cuts alone. So the sales tax raised through the proposed increase will offset the difference between the estimated \$60 million in cuts they have recommended and the actual deficit. The increased sales tax revenues would be used to finance a one-year bond to make up for the shortfall, about \$31 million. The sales tax increase would sunset at the end of 1993. This would give them the time to come up with additional savings to offset these sales tax revenues.

Sales or property tax increase

The county's finances are in such drastic shape it comes down to a simple fact: sales tax or property tax. If it has to be one of the two, the sales tax hike would be less bitter because everyone, including visitors to our area, help share the load.

Under no logical or conceivable circumstances can any tax increase be considered without meaningful corresponding cuts in the size and the cost of Suffolk County government. And, the establishment of an independent financial control board that has not only oversight but the power to veto any further spending or taxing proposals. This financial control board should be made up of people from outside government who have a proven track record of operating prudently and efficiently in commerce and industry.

The state is proposing a similar type board, but there is a big difference. The appointments to the state's proposed board would be made by the governor and the state legislature. The last thing we need here in this county is any further state interference. Many of the financial problems in Suffolk County are the result of state mandates that have imposed spending requirements on the county without reimbursement from the state.

After the experience with the Long Island Power Authority, which the governor manipulated to his liking, we know we cannot trust Mario Cuomo. He is the most political of political animals. He stacked the cards against us in LIPA by choosing a hand-picked hack as chairman, and a majority of board members that did his bidding.

Not a friend of Long Island

Cuomo is not a friend of Long Island, he despises us and anything that

he is associated with has to be suspect. A locally-imposed control board with the power to do what is right is far better than one imposed by the state.

An increase in either sales, real estate or use taxes without a reduction in government is a license for politicians to steal. Aren't you sick and tired of these cowards spending your hard earned money wastefully and then coming back to you and telling you that your government is broke? That you must dig deeper into your meager resources to make up for their sinful ways?

These are not reasonable or responsible people. They are the dregs of society who have driven this county toward bankruptcy. They are taxaholics who do not have the will or the guts to say no. They must be forced by whatever means are necessary to realize that there are 1,300,000 people in this county that they are responsible to, not just the 10,000 to 20,000 who are making a living off the county.

Suffolk County residents cannot afford the government the politicians have grown. The majority of us do not need, nor do we want, the services, the programs or the costs associated with them. We don't use them and we are tired of paying for them. Let's cut out this financial corruption and return to basics.

Most of the items included in the reduction plan put forth by the six legislators are common sense proposals that have been discussed at length, hashed out, agreed upon, but when the time came for implementation were traded off for political favors and other concessions.

If you can afford to continually see your real estate and sales taxes increased by a weak-kneed government, do nothing and they won't either. If you can't, we strongly urge you to personally call your legislator, visit his or her office, let them feel the depth of your emotion. Don't let them off the hook, make them accountable. Look them straight in the eye, let them see and feel your emotion and your disgust.

Deliver a firm message

Cuts must be made. Now! Stop playing politics and get the job done!

Voice your support for those who are trying, despite pressure both political and from special interest groups, to bring sanity to county government.

We have published the legislators' office addresses and office phone numbers. Use them! The members of special interest groups do it all the time. They pressure, they threaten, and they succeed.

This is war folks. This is your county. It's up to you to defend it and stop the incessant raids by those who profit from your misery.

And why not?

'It's not our fault'

We have received numerous letters from county employees and police officers stating that the county's fiscal mess is not their fault. In a sense, they are absolutely right.

They did not individually demand wage increases and additional benefits. They did not twist anyone's arm individually to get the salaries they have now become accustomed to. They are absolutely right, they have mortgages, bills, home improvement and car loans that they took out based upon the salaries that they were granted, obligations they may not be able to pay if they are forced to take salary cutbacks or are laid off.

Individually you have to sympathize with them. But, collectively, we cannot afford the government we have grown. The blame is easy to place. We warned it could happen.

In 1982, public employees did not make as much money as their private sector counterparts. The difference in salary scales was made up with lucrative benefits and work schedules that were not enjoyed by their private sector counterparts. The crowning perk was security. Once you had a civil service or a school job, you were tenured, you had virtual lifetime employment.

In 1982, the county's Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA), a union headed by Charles Nova, made outlandish demands. The collective unions of the county became militant, paralysis of government was threatened, talks of strikes were rampant. Peter Cohalan, then county executive, sent his hit squad into negotiations with instructions to "settle this, we are up for re-election." And settle they did.

We had been following the negotiations very carefully. We realized the implications. Between raises and additional step increases they received, the average employee received a 42 percent increase, some as high as 76 per-

cent. Wages would be substantially higher than those offered by the private sector. It was apparent to anyone who wanted to look at the impact of this settlement that Suffolk would have a fiscal crisis in 1986-1987. Suffolk would have a huge deficit that, unless the economy continued to over-boil, we could not sustain. Bankruptcy would be inevitable.

Patrick Halpin was elected county executive. He lacked experience in an executive position. He brought with him a staff of inexperienced people. He had been elected with union support. He, like Cohalan, negotiated a far too generous contract. The legislature, which never saw anything it did not want to spend money on, approved both of these contracts. By the time Halpin had experience, the deficit had grown too large to handle. It subsequently has been turned over to Bob Gaffney, who is now county executive. He and the legislature can't get a handle on it either.

Hard times are here for Suffolk County. The taxpayers have lost their ability to continue to fund the size of government that has been developed. Tax increases cannot be absorbed. Downsizing of government is being fought on every corner.

In October of 1992, and perhaps before, we will run out of money. Government will be closed down. Maybe this is what it will take to make people realize that, although not individually, collectively they have brought this once powerful county to its knees.

No, there is no one individual to blame. What is to blame is a union that demands too much and elected officials, responsible for managing the affairs of the county, who didn't have the courage to say no, you can't have what we can't afford.

And why not?

Names, telephone numbers for Suffolk County officials are listed on page 6.

The costs are too high

We can't have everything

Long Island is not a utopia nor is it a paradise that was created by someone else who can pay the bills.

Long Island was a fine place to live with an abundance of natural resources, a good sense of community economic opportunity. Unfortunately, over the last decade our quest for the best of everything created our downfall.

What we have demanded, what we have bought, we can no longer afford. The cost of maintaining our governmental structure is more than the mainstream Long Islanders can bear. Think about what we have acquired in our quest for the best of everything.

Tuition in our public schools averages about \$12,000 per student, even for kindergarteners. In New Hampshire, they invest \$4,000 per student. Their students do better than ours on S.A.T. scores. On average, we are spending three times our nation's average on education. About one-third of the tax dollars raised by the state go to education. Up to 70 percent of the tax dollars raised on real estate is funneled into schools. Do we need to make this kind of expenditure? Are we getting our money's worth? Can we afford to continue to invest this heavily in education and be forced to accept mediocrity for the investment? Is it fair that 70 percent of the monies raised by real estate taxes should go to service about 20 percent of the population? Could our schools be run more economically if they were operated by the private sector? Why can parochial and private schools, spending 10 percent to 20 percent of the cost of public education, educate students better? How much longer can we afford to ignore the reality of this situation?

Another area we have continued to invest heavily in is police protection. Police on Long Island are some of the best paid in the world. Yet, are crime rates falling? Do we feel any more secure in our homes? Is a police officer's job that much more demanding or dangerous than many of the other professions?

According to the LIA (Long Island Association), Nassau and Suffolk police are paid 20 percent more than their city counterparts, who work more hours and more days. In all fairness, can you compare the danger factor of working in the city with the suburbs? Is it within our ability to continue to pay these salaries? Or has the reality of our economic circumstances become such that changes have to be made? Why not pay Suffolk cops on parity with the state police?

Do we need a social service system that encourages a proliferation of illegitimate children, whose mothers are paid a bonus for each additional child that they bring into this world? Has our quest to feed, clothe and

house everyone come back to bite the taxpayers who are providing the funds? Shouldn't welfare be a temporary helping hand and not a lifelong profession?

Do we really have an obligation to the self-abusers who become alcohol and drug addicts and contract horrible and expensive diseases because of their chosen way of life? Should we have to take necessities away from our children and ourselves to pay for their selfishness?

This Island was very generous to everyone when it had the economy that allowed it to do so. Today, we

cannot afford the liberalism of the past. New York is the worst state in the nation for taxes. It takes us 144 days to just pay our tax obligation. In Suffolk, it is even longer due to our disproportionate real estate and sales taxes. From 35 percent to 50 percent of all our earnings are taken by the tax man. Are we any better off for this?

Are the services received by those of us who are in the mainstream and pay the bill any better? Our roads are crumbling, our bridges are falling down. Utilization of beaches and parks are being limited.

Our students are graduating from high school too often without the abil-

ity to read and comprehend, to do math and think logically.

Our police protection is so deplorable that unless it is a full-scale emergency, the police do not have the manpower to respond.

Government has crushed itself by its own weight. Priorities have been lost, fairness replaced by greed, leadership by indecision. Government is crumbling throughout Suffolk and Long Island. As it collapses we can only hope that there will be sane people there who possess enough common sense to pick up the pieces and put this Island back together again.

And why not?

Time to stop the rip-off

Your state assemblymen and senators are up for re-election this November. They are expected to be called back into session to vote on a deficit financing bill that will allow the county to borrow \$91 million to finance a deficit in this year's normal operating expenses, which will be paid back over the life of the bond issue which can be anywhere from one year to 10 years.

This is the equivalent of you running up a credit card debt to pay for your rent, food and car expenses when you don't have a job, then having to pay it back at exorbitant interest rates after you become re-employed. Good luck Charlie!

The bond issue will cause county real estate taxes to go up anywhere from one-third to 100 percent. In addition, the county wants permission to increase Suffolk County's share of the sales tax by 12 percent, adding another one-half percent to one of the highest sales taxes in the nation.

They're driving people away

LILCO's rates don't add up

LILCO charges you, the residential customer, 19.58 cents per kilowatt hour for electricity. This is the highest electrical rate in the country.

LILCO claims that it needs state regulatory relief from having to buy power from private producers at a cost of 6 cents per kilowatt hour.

LILCO claims it can generate power cheaper by using imported and expensive oil.

If the cost of generating LILCO's power is less than 6 cents per kilowatt hour, they have a gross margin of profit of about 14 cents per kilowatt hour.

Residential consumers of Florida Power and Light pay 08.82 cents per kilowatt hour for their electricity.

The \$90 million deficit financing plan and the proposal to raise the sales tax were predicated on a combined deficit from last year and the current budget. But last week the county "discovered" some additional revenues and, officials claim, made some cuts lowering the combined deficit to about \$45 million. However, the Gaffney administration is continuing to push for the authorization to borrow \$91 million, and hike the sales tax. That's wrong. It's dishonest. Asking for more than is needed, and boosting taxes as well, has caused many, including some in the legislative ranks, to charge the administration is seeking to squirrel away funds for a future surplus. There is so little confidence in our county officials now, that if they continue with this action they will destroy totally any believability they still have.

Newly-elected County Executive Robert Gaffney and the "no guts for cuts" coalition of county legislators

still have not gotten the message. Residents of Suffolk County can afford NO increases in taxes. The New York State Legislature, your assemblymen and senators, should be contacted by you. You should demand that they vote "no" on these two rip-offs. Tell them to tell Gaffney and his crew to sharpen their pencils, to cut spending more. Warn them that if they vote "yes" you will support their opponent in this coming November's election. It is close enough to November for you to remember how they voted. They are surely aware of this.

Yes, you can stop this rip-off and the tax increases by persuading your assemblymen and your state senators to oppose these measures. It's up to you! You can take the tax increase or you can fight back. Do it today, for they should be voting shortly on this measure.

And why not?

Florida Power and Light is one of the most profitable power companies in the nation. The 08.82 cents per kilowatt hour includes the cost of fuel and generation of electricity, which is a combination of oil, gas and nuclear. It also covers all gross operating costs and a reasonable return to the investors from profits.

If the cost of fuel and generation of electricity is not the major contributor to LILCO's high rates, why are we paying so much more than Florida Power and Light? Is it the mismanagement of LILCO, the bureaucratic waste of our resources? What is the Public Service Commission doing to find out why Florida Power and Light can operate with substantial profits

and still sell electricity to consumers at rates that are 55 percent under LILCO's?

The high cost of energy here on Long Island is one of the contributing factors to our sick economy. The cost of electricity has made our businesses, particularly manufacturing businesses, noncompetitive. High energy costs, which can add \$100 to \$300 per month to the average homeowners cost of owning a home, are forcing people to sell and leave Long Island.

How many more people are going to be driven off this island before someone sits up and takes notice and does something to stop this monopolistic robbery of the citizens.

And why not?

Pristine coverup is revealed

The residents of Suffolk County have been encouraged for years to buy and preserve Robins Island. Even in these hard economic times, with the county facing huge deficits now and in the future, and the recent announcement by federal officials that they do not have the dollars to share in the burden, the cry "Buy Robins Island" continues.

Former county legislator and now Assemblyman Steven Englebright (D-Seatuck) led the charge, using terms such as "linchpin," "crown jewel" and "pristine environmental gem" to excite the emotions of the populace.

He alleged that this sandbar was the key to our quality fresh water for centuries to come. It had to be preserved, it had to be saved, we had to invest our tax dollars in it even though we would be barred from general usage of its benefits.

Recently an Ecological Evaluation report surfaced. It was prepared in the fall of 1983 by Seatuck Research Program for the Nature Conservancy, which has become the county's agency in its attempt to acquire the island. The report reveals that Robins Island is none of those things that Englebright would

have you believe. Since Englebright was involved in the preparation of the report, why didn't he reveal this information? Isn't it just as dishonest to withhold information as to lie. This is not the first time he has been caught being dishonest on reports.

A summary of the history of the island reveals it was at one point industrial, the site of a brickyard that manufactured cement products.

The introduction to the Seatuck report notes this:

"... It was determined that the island is glacial in origin and that human occupation has played a major part in determining the present ecology of the island. Since Europeans arrived at Robins Island in the 1640's, the island has been cleared, farmed, grazed, mined and stocked with exotic flora and fauna. The appearance of the island today is mainly a result of these human activities."

A more recent review of Robins Island compiled by Conservation Advisors of Pennsylvania, assisted by Richard Warren, president of Inter-Science of Southampton, reinforced that view: "Robins Island is not a pristine ecosystem as has been reported in the press. A large portion of the island was

clear cut for agricultural purposes many years ago. The agricultural lands were then abandoned, and a successional forest took the place of the original climax forest. Many of the shore line areas are eroded and need to be stabilized. Storm conditions last year uprooted many trees that now lie on their sides completely dead." Andrew L. Johnson, who authored the report, said he feels the "pristine nature of the island has been greatly exaggerated."

Johnson, with 30 years experience in the conservation field and in acquisition and management of open space, issues this caution: "I have found through this education that the real issue in any proposed acquisition is not the initial acquisition funding but providing funds for the long-term management and use of these lands. Preservation of the open space does not stop with the acquisition of land, but really begins from that moment on." In short, what Johnson is saying is, the real cost of owning Robins Island is not the \$10 plus million dollars purchase price, but the cost of maintaining and keeping it in its pure state. This cost will be an ongoing liability for Suffolk taxpayers that will run into multimillions of precious tax dollars in the future.

The conclusion of the report is that the best use of the island is limited development, whereby it still can remain a taxpayer. It is recommended part of the island be dedicated as a nature preserve with limited access. The proposal outlines a conservation easement plan which would involve management by a conservation organization, but with the county maintaining control. The remaining lands would be developed as prestigious estates in a clustered environment, with minimal roads for emergency purposes and resident transportation by golf cart only. The quality of the island would be ensured and maintained by the private ownership. The public would have as much use if not more, under this plan than they would if it wasn't developed.

Robins Island is symbolic of an out-of-control environmental movement that has gripped this county with hysteria. It has caused the waste of millions of dollars for needless legal fees, consulting reports and engineering studies. These outlandish expenditures are part of the past mistakes made that have brought this county to its fiscal knees, facing a deficit for 1992 of at least \$91 million, and another in 1993 of at least \$120 million.

Where common sense and compromise could have prevailed, people like Englebright insisted on all or nothing. They used half-truths, inflammatory rhetoric to present their point of view. They've dangerously wasted our precious resources and they have run away to other offices where they do not have to endure the consequences.

I am of a rare breed myself; I am a native eastern Long Islander. Most of my friends and associates whom I grew up with are gone. They have had to flee their nest because the nest no longer could be supported by the income they earned, and because of the demands of government on their meager resources.

Most of us are natural born conservationists. We appreciate the beauties of nature, the interaction of man and the environment. We want to preserve those things that are important, that we can afford, and develop prudently those resources which can be preserved for future generations. It's easy to spend somebody else's money to cause somebody else grief and pain. It's not easy when the shoe is on the other foot.

Unless common sense starts to prevail, the very assets that we are trying to preserve will end up as dumping sites and wastelands that future generations will be looking at with disgust and endeavoring to find ways to clean up. We need common sense, it is the most important ingredient in planning our future. Schemes to buy Robins Island and other parcels of land that have no particular watershed or major ecological value must be reconsidered. We must look seriously at the preservation of these lands through cooperation and compromise. Allow parts of these lands to be clustered and developed so that they can remain or become tax producers, while maintaining the remainder to ensure an ecological balance in the future.

Present these plans honestly, based upon fact rather than on scare tactics and fabricated images. If the worthiness of the project can withstand the truth, it will have widespread support.

And why not?

The last great hope is gone

The candidacy of Ross Perot represented the last great hope for millions of Americans. Although they didn't know him, the image of a self-made billionaire, a man of decision, an independent, a candidate who believed in America first, was intriguing.

Last Thursday, when Ross Perot announced he was withdrawing as a potential presidential candidate, shock reverberated from Maine to California. The flame of democracy dimmed for many Americans. For these people, Perot represented change. Clinton and Bush are the status quo. They may talk about change, new ideas, but few believe them. The people have been fooled too often.

Perot claims he dropped out for the good of the country because if his candi-

dacy was pursued, the three candidates would be locked in a dead heat. The voters would not give a majority to any candidate. The archaic system of the electoral college would be paralyzed. The decision would go to the House of Representatives. The Congress that we hate and distrust would select our next President, what could be worse?

We will never know if Ross Perot was ever serious about being President. Did he make an idle threat and set up an unattainable goal of being placed on the ballot by citizens in all 50 states? Did he have any idea of the anger, the frustration, the fury and the energy he was tapping into? When he saw that his bluff had been called, that the public responded, did he realize he did not have the temperament, the patience or the

ability to be a great President? For whatever reason he chose, he has left behind an angry and frustrated citizenry who we hope will go to the polls and will vote regardless of whether they support George Bush or Bill Clinton. We do hope they will vote and turn Congress upside down, cleaning house.

Congress was once run by citizens who served a term or two and left. This was traded for career positions and our government has gone downhill since. Our last great hope is that the citizens of the United States will throw the incumbents out and once again make Congress the people's house.

Perot will no longer be the wagon master. It's up to the outriders to do the job themselves.

And why not?

Support the volunteers

Summertime is the traditional season when our volunteer organizations, primarily the fire departments and the ambulance corps, solicit funds for their organizations.

These volunteers stand ready 365 days a year to serve their fellowmen. They undergo hundreds of hours of training. They are as professional as you can hope for. They do not receive compensation for the services they provide.

The volunteers do have some social and recreational events which are paid for by the funds raised from the com-

munity through these fund drives. Considering the service they perform, and the hours they spend serving the public at any time of day and in all kinds of weather, they deserve such opportunities. If you consider what it would cost in taxes to support a fully-paid fire department or ambulance corps, you would have to agree these volunteers offer the best bargain around.

We love our volunteers, without them Long Island would not be what it is. We encourage you to be as generous as you can in supporting the fund-rais-

ing drives of fire departments and ambulance corps.

Each department and organization chooses its own method of raising funds. Some use direct mail, some go door-to-door, others hold raffles, barbecues and carnivals. Whatever method they use, we hope you support them. To be sure you do not miss your opportunity to contribute, why not just write a check and mail it to your local volunteer fire department and volunteer ambulance corps?

And why not?

Did They bring home the bacon?

State legislators at election time are fond of rattling off "the bacon" they bring home to the local district. Here is a menu that you might use in seeing how well your state legislator served you during this past session.

As an appetizer, let's list all the taxes that they reduced and how much they were worth.

For the salad, let's see what they did with the DEC, the green machine. Did they stop the DEC from being prosecutor, judge, jury and jailer? A little separation of powers, maybe?

Did they get any mandate relief, allowing us to use our usable landfills?

Did they come up with any funding to help us solve our garbage problems which now, because of DEC orders and dictates, cost almost more than police protection? Speaking about police protection, did they do anything to untie our hands and give us relief from binding arbitration so that maybe, for the highest salaries in the nation, our police can be negotiated to working the same work schedule, salary and benefits as the State Police?

Now, how about the entree? Instead of seafood and meat, we will divide them into education and social services.

What mandate relief did they develop for us that will free us from being

forced to spend 70 percent of our real estate taxes on education? And yet many students are allowed to graduate not able to read or comprehend basic math.

Did they pass a bill limiting school budget votes to one or two?

Did they do away with the tenure laws that protect burnt out, incompetent teachers, while harming the better, more energetic, young ones?

Did they put guts in the austerity budget law that only allows school boards to give courses and provide services that are mandated by the state and lead to a Regents diploma?

Did they pass a law requiring outside testing of allegedly handicapped children before the county or the school district is required to spend two and a-half times the cost of a non-handicapped student, or did they leave the bacon in Albany and continue to allow the providers of services to profit from testing and then accepting prospective clients?

Did they bring home a bill that makes it illegal for those who work in an industry that derives funds from the government to be involved in the election process for those who improve the finances of that agency?

Did they bring home a meaningful residency law that will stop people from migrating to the state and the county for instant welfare and all benefits?

Did they come up with a plan for New York State, modeled after California, that provides social services for a third more people at half the cost of New York?

Did they put a law on the books that if you are able to work you must get a job, or move? You don't get the hard-working taxpayers money for simply refusing to work.

Did they put a law on the books that gives the same rights to welfare mothers

as mothers who are not on welfare? If you have an additional child you don't get a raise, you make do with what you have or you don't have an additional child.

This menu could go on, but we're on a diet because we're out of money and just a little bit of the above will suffice.

Have any of our legislators brought home even a single slice of bacon?

And why not?

LILCO lies again

We are paying the highest electrical rates in the nation because LILCO lied to everyone who listened to them during the Shoreham debacle. Fresh from victory at Shoreham due to Cuomo's sweetheart deal, LILCO announced they were reforming. They would tell the truth in the future. No more lies.

Two years ago, LILCO promised the residents of Shelter Island that they would pay them \$275,000 per year in taxes if they were granted the right to bury cables under the Island. Islanders

were not thrilled about this proposition, as they felt it would interfere with the environment and pose potential health risks in the future. The loss of \$275,000 in taxes was too great for some of the politicians. Although this payment is small by comparison to most major taxes, it is a major item in Shelter Island's budget because of its size.

LILCO now says they will only pay \$60,000, shortchanging the Island by \$215,000. They claim it's the state's fault because of the formulas they've set down. We say, LILCO, you are robbing Shelter Island. You made a deal, it was your numbers that were used. The town has budgeted its expenditures based upon this commitment. LILCO, you owe the people of Shelter Island a quarter of a million dollars. Stop trying to welsh on this obligation. The Island granted you your request. You agreed to pay them the fee in the form of taxes. Put up, be honest, be forthright or, at the very least, the board of directors should resign in disgrace.

Obviously, LILCO under its current management is still up to their old tricks. It is a dishonorable citizen of Long Island. It is a major contributor to the Island's downfall.

Serious consideration should be given to a LIPA (Long Island Power Authority) takeover of this corrupt giant. The mechanism is there for them to do it, just the political courage and the leadership are needed.

Do we have any politicians with courage or leadership abilities willing to fight to bring Long Island back?

And why not?

Make Cuts, don't borrow it

By now the State Legislature may well have capitulated and given Suffolk County the authority to borrow millions of dollars to offset a budget deficit. Authority to borrow against tomorrow, to pay for today. As they have done in the past, and undoubtedly will continue to do, unless saner heads prevail.

County Executive Robert Gaffney and a bi-partisan group of legislators, nicknamed the "no guts for cuts" coalition, asked for this borrowing ability when it appeared the county would have a deficit of \$91 million. That deficit included a \$35 million shortfall from 1991, and a new deficit condition in 1992. It did not include what has now been estimated as a \$116 million deficit for next year, 1993. The 1993 deficit includes a payback for one-shot solutions which were supposed to have wiped out the 1991 deficit, but didn't.

The 1992 deficit figure has been di-

minishing because of "unexpected" funds in lower pension payments, state welfare reimbursements that had been held up on the state level, and assorted other factors which seem to come on an almost daily basis. Interestingly, the deficit figure has declined without cuts being made in the county's spending plan. Our county officials are having a lot of trouble coming up with cuts, but absolutely no problems in endorsing borrowing or sales tax increases to resolve their overspending.

The new projections give hope, even if it is just a glimmer, that by shrewd management and painful cuts, the total deficit can be wiped out before the end of the year.

To accomplish this goal, government will have to be cut back. Offices, possibly shut for a day or two each week. All but essential services, curtailed. It's possible but, it will take politicians with more courage than has been thus far displayed to do it.

At the writing of this editorial it appears that the coalition is becoming unraveled. The public is getting the idea of who is wearing a black hat and who is wearing a white one. Some of the "no guts for cuts" guys are getting religion. They are feeling the anger and the frustration of the voters. They are scrambling for their political lives. They know, and they have heard from you, you want cuts not new taxes. You want cuts, you don't want borrowing.

Keep the pressure on them, neutralize the unions who are calling up these same legislators and telling them they prefer to see taxes increased and they want their raises, now, regardless of how much money the county is in debt.

According to the legislators we have talked to, your voice is beginning to have an affect. Make it louder and more frequent.

And why not?

Is Long Island part of New York?

Do you believe Long Island is part of New York State? Mario Cuomo evidently does not.

Long Island is paying as much to meet the state mandates for closing our landfills as we are for police protection.

Recently, we were sent a message from the governor by Legislator Bill Jones of Sag Harbor. The message announced contributions by the state to assist localities in capping their landfills

and also providing extensions for compliance with the mandates.

We excitedly looked through the list to see which Long Island towns would be aided by the state. Much to our chagrin, but not to our surprise, not one Long Island municipality was on the list.

Did Mario forget that Long Island is part of the state? Why did Mario forget to give us back any of our own money

even though we contribute 17 percent of the state's income? And yet, we are getting next to nothing back. He took it from us and spread it out among a few counties upstate. Why aren't our state legislators screaming mad? What are they doing about the "drop dead, Long Island" attitude of the governor? What does it take to make our state representatives angry enough to stop going along to get along?

Whether Mario Cuomo realizes it or

not, Long Island is no longer rich. And, it's getting poorer by the day because of state mandates, cuts in educational aid, the giveaway deal he negotiated with LILCO, and his slipshod management of state government which is driving the state, and us, deeper and deeper into debt.

Give us our fair share or give us our freedom. Let Long Island become a state of its own.

And why not?