

WILLMOTTS & WHY NOTS

DAVID J. WILLMOTT SR., EDITOR

Freedom ends

Come this day, July 4, 1996, the people of the continental United States will transfer their freedoms and rights to the government of the United States.

Henceforth, the populace will not express in word, deed or written message any idea, thought or pronouncement that is not approved by the government.

The right to practice a religion of your choice is suspended. All who feel a need to pray to God are directed to pray to the President.

The right of open vote and the populace's selection of their representatives and leaders is suspended. All governmental officials shall be selected by an elite group of owners of America.

All property rights, titles and possessions are hereby ceded to the government. The rulers of the government will determine which of the populace may use these possessions and pay tribute to the ruling class for such use.

Henceforth, every inhabitant in the lands of America shall be issued a national identification card that will be inscribed with a computer code. This code will contain four generations of family history. The information in this code will also determine the areas of work, travel and associations the individual will be allowed to participate in.

Henceforth, women must apply to the state for the privilege of becoming pregnant. The state will determine the number of children that will be allowed to be born each year and the sex of these new inhabitants.

From this day forth, every man, woman and child will work a minimum of 10 hours per day, six days per week. Assignments of jobs and productivity

quotas will be determined on a town, state and federal needs basis. Residents of the Americas will receive a stipend for food, shelter and clothing. All other monies garnered from these endeavors shall accrue to the state and be used for its own purposes.

There are 9,471 additional pages of regulations that everyone is commanded to read and understand and abide by. This must be accomplished no later than 12 a.m., July 5th. Those who fail to comply will be summarily executed.

Thank God this is nothing more than a figment of this editor's imagination. Our Constitution spells out just about the opposite of this proclamation.

The only thing standing between our Constitution and the dread that this proclamation would bring is an ever watchful populace who take part in their government and do not allow our government to run amuck or the Constitution to be subverted and rendered useless.

You and I are the only true guardians of freedom. When we allow our interest in government to wane, when we let the other guy do it, we give up part of our citizenship.

Tomorrow, Independence Day, it should have more meaning than shooting off fire crackers, drinking beer and enjoying ourselves. Let each of us individually reflect upon what it means to live in the land of the free. To have a Constitution that spells out our rights. As we dwell upon our rights, let us also think about our responsibilities. Nothing is free, not even independence.

And why not?

Too late to turn back

In an ideal world, no one would be allowed to build on the coast. The barn door is closed.

People have built their homes on the coast, some right on the water's edge. Others set their homes several thousand feet back. These homeowners built with the tacit understanding that insurance was available and would continue to be available.

After Hurricane Andrew devastated South Florida, insurance companies have been canceling homeowners' policies. Insurance for new structures is next to impossible to obtain. We are not all that upset about these newcomers, but we are upset about those homeowners who have existing structures and are having their insurance canceled.

Senator Al D'Amato has jumped into this issue with both feet. He is pressuring the New York State Insurance Commissioner to take strong actions to regulate

those that insure in New York State. It has been suggested that the insurance companies be banned from canceling policies, or face the loss of their licenses. It has also been suggested that all policies in the state be assessed a charge to mitigate against the additional risk that shoreline policyholders face.

We are glad to see that D'Amato has put his prestige on the line and has become involved in an issue that some would consider a local problem.

D'Amato is the head of the powerful Senate Banking Committee and can draft legislation that could make this a national issue. The insurance companies may have bitten off more than they can chew. D'Amato is a tiger who is relentless in pursuing his goals. The people have a fighter in their corner and now stand a change against the power of the large insurance corporations. That's good news.

And why not?

Is Suffolk in New York State?

The Suffolk County Legislature has postponed the deadline for the New York State Police to take over the patrol of the Long Island Expressway to October 1, 1996. July 1st should have been the show-down on the LIE. We are disappointed, particularly, when it has been revealed that Westchester County has been paid by the state to patrol their state roads.

What's good for Westchester should be good for Suffolk and Nassau counties. Either the state puts their cops on their road or pays a healthy premium to Nassau and Suffolk counties for providing these services.

Nassau and Suffolk are, unfortunately, part of New York State. We send our taxes upstate and get darn little back as our fair share. If the state can find the funds to reimburse Westchester, they

should have no trouble finding the funds to reimburse Nassau and Suffolk if we continue to provide the patrols for this state road.

On October 1, Pataki and Company better either come up with a multi-million dollar check or be prepared to have the New York State Troopers available for patrol.

October 1 is just a little over a month away from the November state legislative elections. When our state representatives ask for our vote, tell them if they can't get the state to pay its fair share or produce the troopers necessary to patrol these highways, they have been useless as a delegation, and it may be time to give some new blood a chance to do what is right for the constituents.

And why not?

Come one, come all

You are invited to be our personal guest at the Glenn Miller Concert we are giving at CPI in Hampton Bays on the Fourth of July.

The world renowned Glenn Miller Orchestra will play four sets starting at 8 p.m. Each set will last approximately 40 minutes with a 20-minute intermission.

The famous Canoe Place Inn, now known as CPI, can accommodate approximately 2,000 guests at each set.

The Glenn Miller Orchestra was an appropriate choice for this evening's entertainment as the band is steeped in history and played a huge part in keeping the morale up of our armed forces who served during World War II. This is real American music that all ages can understand and swing to.

This year we wanted to do something special for our readers in appreciation of the wonderful support they have given to our subscription drive and for telling our advertisers that they saw their ads in Suffolk Life.

Most of our readers have strong family values, a sense of patriotism and a love of our country. This concert, symbolically being given on the Fourth of July, reinforces our belief in our wonderful country and



the residents of Suffolk County.

Entrance to the concert will require the invitation located in today's paper, which will admit two.

Join us. Enjoy with us an evening of fellowship and wonderful music.

And why not?

The message was ignored

The message was loud and clear back in March of 1993 in an analysis by the Budget Review Office (BRO) of the Suffolk County Legislature of a proposed labor pact between the county and the Faculty Association of the Suffolk Community College. But apparently no one listened.

That pact covered the academic years of 1991-92 through 1995-96. When the initial agreement was reached between county negotiators and Faculty Association officials, County Executive Robert Gaffney indicated the proposed agreement amounted to a 12% increase over its term. He was wrong. The BRO analysis pegged the increases at 24% to 42%. Gaffney said later he was not aware of the 4% steps the faculty would receive in addition to the increases. The total cost of the increases excluding the step increases, according to BRO, was \$12,633,533. With the step increases, which the faculty would have received anyway because of the terms of previous negotiations, the total new cost was pegged at \$21,454,383.

The BRO report included this caution: "If student attendance should decline (as it has) or remain at or near the current level, and the state should fail to grant any significant increases in aid (it has cut, not increased aid), the college will be hard pressed to raise student tuition rates and/or seek a higher subsidy from the county. Most probably a combination of increased student tuition rates and the county's annual subsidy will be required in future years."

We are now in those "future years." In preparing their budget for the new college year, SCC officials did exactly what the BRO had predicted: raised tuition rates and sought an increase in the county's subsidy.

This has not set well with Gaffney who offered his own budget proposal which reduced both revenues and posi-

tions. Critical comments included in his budget message has created strained relations between county and college officials.

In response to Gaffney's claim that the college has increased administrative positions even though student enrollment has dropped and full time faculty positions have declined, college officials counter that the increase in positions results from contractual agreements, negotiated by the county, not the college, that calls for the creation of assistant

department head positions, which are administrative posts.

In our view, there are three parties to the current dispute: college officials, Gaffney, and those members of the legislature who voted for the labor contracts. And one big loser: the college itself and, thus, the students it serves. A war of words will

do nothing to resolve the problem.

What is needed is a combined effort on the part of all three parties to find a solution to the current financial dilemma, without piercing the county's 4% budget increase cap. Piercing the cap is an easy way out for legislators at the expense of the public. It is not good government.

Suffolk Community College offers our residents an opportunity to further their education, close to home, at an affordable cost. It should not be sacrificed because of the mistakes of those in responsible, decision making positions.

We call upon Gaffney and the legislature's presiding officer, Donald Blydenburgh, to sit down with college officials and bring about a financial solution to the fiscal crisis they all had a hand in creating.

We cautioned back in 1993 that the proposed contract, which was ultimately approved, would prove to be a financial time bomb. That explosion has now come and threatens the future of the college. It is now up to those who ignored those words of caution to resolve the crisis.

And why not?

Lifetime payoff

Suffolk County Deputy Sheriffs want to be able to retire after 20 years of employment. They want us, the taxpayers of Suffolk County, to pay them half pay for the rest of their lives and to continue to fund their medical benefits. In these days, people in their 40's and 50's are expected to live to their mid-70's and early-80's.

A demand like this is usually part of the bargaining practices in negotiations. The county executive is responsible for negotiations. He appoints a labor commissioner who works with attorneys, sits down with the union and tries to hammer out a deal. If both parties are too far apart in what they want and in what they can give, they reach an impasse. The Public Employees Relations Board (PERB) is brought into this scenario and makes recommendations. The recommendations are not binding.

The county and the deputies' union have been bargaining on a new contract since 1991. The sheriffs have charged that the county executive has not bargained in good faith. Another way of looking at it is the county executive can't give what he doesn't have or he would have to raise taxes to meet the demands. On the retirement issue, this is the position the county executive has taken. It will cost \$50 million to fund the sheriffs' demands. If the county gives in, they know they will be faced with the same demands from the correctional officers and the park rangers.

The sheriffs' deputies are frustrated and have taken their case to the Suffolk County Legislature. Negotiations are not conducted on a legislative level. This is the prerogative and the responsibility of the county executive. The legislature, nonetheless, passed a resolution authorizing the 20-year retirement. The legislature was pressured by the deputies and, typical of the legislators, they took the path of least resistance.

The county executive vetoed the resolution and now it is being sent back to the county legislature. The measure originally passed the legislature with a 15-vote majority. This is enough to over-ride the county executive's veto. Each legislator has the opportunity to rethink their position. They

Politics as usual

New York State still does not have a budget. Governor George Pataki submitted his plan for this year to the legislature six weeks before it was required by law, hoping to expedite passage of the budget and have it completed by April 1.

Last week, Senate Republican Majority Leader Joseph Bruno and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver proposed a compromise budget. This is unusual, as rarely does the Democratic Assembly agree with the Republican Senate. The compromise, unfortunately, follows procedures that have led to New York State's dismal, financial condition, according to Pataki. The Bruno-Silver budget proposal over-estimates revenues and under-estimates expenditures. Their budget allows for a continued waste of taxpayers money and an increase of \$713 million in state expenditures. It eliminates most of the reforms, even modest ones, that Pataki has been asking for and the taxpayers have cried out for.

It's the same scenario that brought the

should consider the following questions:

Why should any county employee be granted retirement after only 20 years of work? Are these employees impaired after 20 years because of their job? Has their health been ruined because of the requirements of their employment?

Is it right, is it fair, to ask the county taxpayers to increase their tax burden to fund this cost? Does the average taxpayer have any leeway in their income to accept the responsibility for increased taxes?

Is politics driving this issue instead of fairness? Has the legislature seen the cost calculated on what it will take to fund the long-term benefits that may be required under an early retirement plan? If we are granting the retiring deputies and their spouses life-time medical benefits, what will the cost be? Is there any cap on the contributions the taxpayers or the county will make on the medical benefits? Will the retirees be expected to pay a portion or all of the medical benefits?

If the deputies are allowed to retire before they are 65, will the retirement benefits start on the day they retire or will they become eligible for the retirement benefits when they turn 65?

If the benefits are granted to the deputies, in fairness, shouldn't every county employee be entitled to the same windfall? What

would be the cost of funding everyone who works for the county for 20 years and decides to retire?

The million dollar question is why should the legislature allow itself to become involved in a function that is clearly reserved for the county executive?

We strongly urge all of our readers to contact their local legislator and ask them to answer these questions.

How can they come before you next election time without justifying why they are willing to give away your tax dollars without getting you anything in return?

A list of your legislators and their phone numbers are listed on this page. If you care about your tax bill and what is fair in Suffolk County, call or write them today.

And why not?

downfall of Governor Mario Cuomo. He could not control the legislature's appetite to spend. The legislators are not willing to take the heat for cutting back on the growth of state projects and put limits on what we fund.

Pataki has realistically addressed the abuses and presented a budget that addressed them. By submitting his budget early, he allowed ample time for open, honest debate and realistic compromise.

The legislature is up to its same old tricks and we hope Pataki does not cave in to their pressure tactics. If the legislature wants, it can pass a budget and submit it to the governor, the governor's ace is that he has line item veto powers. He should use this tool ruthlessly if the legislature pushes him into a corner.

New York needs leadership, particularly on fiscal matters. If the legislature will not be responsible, then they may make Pataki a national hero.

And why not?

Suffolk County legislators

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| District 1 | Michael J. Caracciolo (R), PO Box 1030, Main Road, Aquebogue, NY 11931, 852-3200. |
| District 2 | George O. Galdi (D), PO Box 599, Sag Harbor, NY 11963, 852-8900. |
| District 3 | Fred Towle, Jr. (R), 640 Montauk Highway, Shirley, NY 11967, 852-1300. |
| District 4 | Joseph Caracappa (R), 248 Middle Country Road, Building 1 - Suite 3, Selden, NY 11784, 854-2700. |
| District 5 | Nora Bredes (D), Suite 5, 46 Route 25A, East Setauket, NY 11733, 854-1500. |
| District 6 | Martin Haley (R), 725 Route 25A, Miller Place, NY 11764, 854-1600. |
| District 7 | Brian Foley (D), 27 Havens Avenue, Patchogue, NY 11772, 854-1400. |
| District 8 | Steve Levy (D), 22-30 Railroad Avenue, Sayville, NY 11782, 854-4900. |
| District 9 | Joseph Rizzo (R), Deputy Presiding Officer, 2941 Sunrise Highway, Islip Terrace, NY 11752, 854-0900. |
| District 10 | Tom Finlay (R), 21 Maple Avenue, Bay Shore, NY 11706, 854-0940. |
| District 11 | Angie Carpenter (R), 4 Udall Road, West Islip, NY 11795, 854-4100. |
| District 12 | Donald Blydenburgh (R), Presiding Officer, William H. Rogers Legislature Building, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, NY 11787-4311, 853-4088. |
| District 13 | Michael D'Andre (R-C), 59 Landing Avenue, Smithtown, NY 11787, 854-3900. |
| District 14 | David Bishop (D), 276 N. Wellwood Avenue, Lindenhurst, NY 11757, 854-1100. |
| District 15 | Maxine S. Postal (D), 15 Albany Avenue, Amityville, NY 11701, 854-1111. |
| District 16 | Allan Binder (R), 1789 East Jericho Turnpike, Huntington, NY 11743, 854-5100. |
| District 17 | Paul Tonna (R), 1996 Deer Park Avenue, Deer Park, NY 11729, 854-1900. |
| District 18 | C. Stephen Hackeling (R), 143 Main Street, Huntington, NY 11743, 854-4500. |

Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's

The county executive is the boss. He is the executive, the manager, hired by the voters of Suffolk County to run the county. He chooses the heads of the departments, and his own staff. The department heads, for the most part, hire the rest of the work force, primarily off the civil service list.

Legislators are members of the board of directors, which is called the legislature. Their function is to develop and pass laws, establish policy and hold public meetings.

Suffolk County's Police Commissioner, an appointment of the county executive, has come under fire because of a situation of his own making. Commissioner Cosgrove has allowed overtime for the police to get out of budget. During the first three months of 1996, the police used up more than \$3,000,000 out of the \$5,000,000 allocated for the entire year. The legislature drew attention to this scenario. The county executive reacted and Cosgrove responded to the pressure to keep the overtime in budget by saying that the only alternative he had was to cut foot patrols, highway visibility and slow down response times. This was stupid of him and he asked for a fight.

There are ways Cosgrove can better manage the department than cutting out highly visible, public demanded items. He could order his captains and lieutenants to more tightly control overtime. He could order the elimination of overtime for all but sensitive, safety-related needs. He could cut out some of the fat and the waste in the budget, including more civilization of non-safety related police functions.

The legislature was angered by Cosgrove's response. Some legislators are demanding that Cosgrove be replaced. The legislature has proposed a bill to allow them to hire the police commissioner after January 1.

This is a function of the county executive and should remain his prerogative. The legislature is there to advise the county executive, not do his job. If the county executive is not strong enough to control his

department heads then it is he the voters should fire.

One of the biggest problems in Suffolk County government since the creation of the Suffolk County Legislature is that each legislator deems himself or herself as a mini-county executive. They attempt to confuse the roles of the two branches of government. In doing so, they cause confusion and waste taxpayers' money.

Some county legislators' districts are not even in the police district. They do not pay police district charges. Outside of some administrative and high level detective services, which they are assessed for, they receive no benefits.

The legislature currently has the right to approve or reject the candidates for police commissioner proposed by the county executive. This gives them real govern-

mental oversight and avoids the politics.

Additionally, the legislature with their authority to approve or reject budgets have the ultimate control. If they don't like the commissioner, they can slash the budget, and the executive must live within its perimeters.

There is more to this fight than who should hire the police commissioner. Some legislators are beginning to feel their oats and are attempting to diminish the role of the county executive. This should not be allowed to happen.

The commissioners and the department heads are clearly employees of the county executive. They are directly responsible to him and he is directly responsible for making sure that the commissioners get the biggest bang for the taxpayers' investment that they are charged with directing and spending.

The county executive's success or failure is directly tied to the productivity of the department heads. Render to the county executive what is the county executive's.

And why not?

brg
Father's Day - June 16th

I remember Dad

I remember Dad. It's funny, I don't remember the tangible gifts my dad gave me over his lifetime. As important as I am sure they were at the time, the memory of the intangibles remain fresh in my mind.

My dad was my role model. He was a stand-up, straight shooter. A very hard worker who wanted the best for his family.

By example, Dad gave me a strong set of values, morals and ethics. He wouldn't tolerate discrimination. He always put his hand out to help the next guy coming up the ladder, regardless of race, color or creed.

Dad suffered several major setbacks in his life, mostly very expensive health-related calamities that befell us children and other family members. Instead of whining and crying about how the cards were dealt, he would pick himself up from ruin and work harder to rebuild again. Four times in his life he saw himself go from riches to broke. The money that he had accumulated through his abilities, wits and hard work would be wiped out by doctors' bills, hospitals and specialists.

Dad had vision and was willing to take a chance. Dad met one enemy he had trouble overcoming, alcohol. The fifth time he had severe adversity in his life, instead of fighting back, he turned to the bottle. It took him 15 years during which he lost most everything before he, on his own, decided to quit drinking. Unfortunately, he had given up 15 of what could have been his best years. His health was pretty much ruined but his will wasn't. He came back but was withdrawn and was not able to enjoy his

grandchildren.

Dad was not an emotional-type person. He has always kept a lot in. His stoicism was a blessing on one hand, but robbed his children of his real warmth and love. You had to look under the surface to find it in all its glory.

I learned from my father's strengths and his weaknesses. When Dad passed on I found a strange phenomenon happening. Right after I had said my evening prayers and was in that twilight zone between consciousness and sleep, I had very real and very vivid conversations with him. Conversations we should have had when he was physically alive. We communicated about all the things a close father and son will discuss. I never was able to figure out whether this was a supernatural phenomenon or a reflection of my needs and my vivid imagination at work. Whatever, and for whatever reason, I still to this day value these communiques and draw upon them for strength and guidance.

My dad was not without sin, but he gave everything that he had to his family, his community, his church. There is not a day that goes by that I don't remember him in intellect and prayer. Thanks, Dad for being the best you could.

Honor your father if he is alive this Sunday. If not, talk to him through prayer. He will be listening because he still loves you.

Happy Father's Day.
And why not?

Not acceptable in Suffolk

Bigotry and racism are just plain not acceptable in Suffolk County.

In recent weeks, two incidents of racism happened here, to the shock and disgust of most residents. A Riverhead man was nearly beaten to death at a club in Westhampton Beach. A cross was torched on the lawn of an East Setauket couple.

The tragedy of these two racial incidents is that the races, for the most part, respect each other and get along in this county. We all have some prejudices but, by and large, we tolerate and we respect each other.

There is good and bad in all people. There are stereotypes and some people try to live up to them. Most of us go about our business of working, raising our families. In the workplace there are people of colors, all colors. We work alongside of others. We respect them for what they do and who they are. The color of their skin, their religion is accepted and ignored.

In our communities and in our homes, we readily assimilate. There are few areas of Suffolk County that are not integrated. Sure, we choose to live amongst those people that are the most like ourselves, but, that does not mean that we exclude others.

Human compassion and understanding know no color barrier. A prime example of love without the blindness of prejudice came recently when members of the Nation-

al Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) reached out to fill the needs of a young wheelchair-bound boy, eight years old, suffering with brain cancer since he was three years of age. Blind and without the ability to speak, it has become more and more difficult to carry the youngster to an upstairs bedroom as he grows. The NARI members donated materials and time to construct an addition to the home to fit the youngster's needs.

"All those workers were white and we're black. But it didn't matter to them; they did their work with love..."

"All those workers were white and we're black. But it didn't matter to them; they did their work with love. Let this be an example of how blacks and whites can create such wonderful things when we work

together. Blacks and whites need to hear that. Please project this, it's so important," said the youth's grateful mother.

The two recent incidents, displays of utter, vicious racism, should not be tolerated by any decent Suffolk County resident. Let us put anger into positive energy and reach out with our fellow Suffolk citizens to build upon our strengths of tolerance.

Let us, by example, smother the flames of disrespect, racial prejudice and hatred. If each of us put our shoulder to the wheel and recommit to erasing intolerance, Suffolk will be a better county for the generations to come.

And why not?

The Sunrise Killing Fields

Every spring this time of year for the last dozen years, I have driven down Sunrise Highway coming from Southampton to Riverhead. I marvel at the glorious sight of the waving fields of wildflowers and grasses that are located in the median between the north and south lanes of Sunrise Highway. The yellows, the blues, the greens and the whites.

It's a glorious sight and each year I am saddened when I see the New York State Department of Public Works start their job of mowing the median. Within a day or two, Mother Nature's beauty will be replaced with dead cuttings, chopped-up paper and visible litter.

Isn't there a better way? What do

we accomplish by this wholesale cutting of growth? We have been told that if a car was to pull onto the grass with an overheated exhaust system or a faulty catalytic converter, a fire could start.

Why not just cut a car's width and leave the rest natural? Wouldn't the employees be better used to maintain the roads and the shoulders? Wouldn't our tax dollars be better used to plant and beautify than on equipment and fuel?

Someday, some spring, I will come down this road and see that man is respecting nature and allowing her to be as good as she can be.

And why not?

Biting the bullet

The supervisors of two Suffolk towns are destined to finish far down on the popularity list of the unions which represent town employees. Babylon Supervisor Richard Schaffer and Islip Supervisor Pete McGowan have won no friends in the ranks of union officials with actions they have taken in negotiations with their employees, but they have saved their taxpayers a ton of money.

The motivation in each case was financial. With state funds being reduced, and costs escalating, both took hard stances in the negotiation process. McGowan gave employees an offer of job security for the term of the labor contract in return for a salary freeze. Schaffer, facing a growing deficit, offered a lag payroll, the holding of two weeks salary to be returned when the employee retires. While the payback would be at the employees' current rate of pay, it would include interest. Both unions initially said no.

As a result, Babylon Town laid off 70 employees. In the final analysis, 70 employees do not have a lag delay, they have an elimination of their paycheck, and an end to their benefits.

McGowan, after union leaders stood firm against the pay freeze in return for job security, took a hard stand. He announced the alternative was now a pay freeze, or he would privatize the positions of the town employees. Blue collar union members, by a slim margin of 14 votes, accepted the job security at the same salary. White collar workers said no, and McGowan vows to move toward privatization of the clerical positions in this category. He reports he will hold a legislative hearing on the issue shortly, the first step in the privatization process.

The range for salaries in the white collar category is \$25,838 to \$83,128, including benefits. The average salary is

\$47,736 and the median is \$45,482, according to town records.

Both supervisors have staunchly declared they will not give away what they do not have, the financial resources to meet the demands of the union. The alternative, both have said, would be a tax increase which they do not wish to impose on their residents.

We applaud both Schaffer and McGowan. It is not easy to stand firm in the face of the political pressures and threats that have been and will continue to be hurled over this issue. Far too many officials on the county and town levels, and in school districts, have caved in to demands and the escalation of tax rates is the result. They took the easy way out rather than stand tall for the taxpayers.

There is no secret that taxpayers face a financial crisis from the ever climbing tax rates. In towns and school districts programs have been cut and services reduced to meet the rising costs. Residents and businesses have been forced to move from the area to seek financial survival.

When will it stop? When the work force, and their leaders, realize that a continuation of their paychecks and benefits is far better than making demands that will surely cause more and more town, county and school officials to take the hard stands McGowan and Schaffer have, and controversy and labor strife will continue to grow.

The taxpayers have been biting the bullet for a long time, it is time that those who demand more and more share in the burden. "Hold the line or lose your job" is the promise for the future. We hope the work force and the union leaders come to realize that keeping what you have is a far better alternative to losing what you had.

And why not?

In the final analysis, 70 employees do not have a lag delay, they have an elimination of their paycheck, and an end to their benefits.

Reduce the cost of New York

Last winter, while we were in Florida, we were comparing the cost of food. My friend was dismayed at the difference in common, everyday products. She asked why? I tried to explain that the cost of doing business in New York is astronomical as compared to the cost of doing business in Florida. Not only is electricity and labor more expensive, but regulations drive up the prices even more substantially.

The cost of Workers' Compensation in New York is 57% higher than the nation's average. Governor George Pataki has proposed a bill to reform Workers' Compensation. It meets two criteria, it would reduce the cost to employers by 25% while, at the same time, increasing benefits to workers from \$400 to \$520 the first year, to \$540 the second year and \$560 the third year. The real meaning of the bill is that it undoes some of the high cost of bureaucracy that surrounds a workers' compensation claim.

The real meaning of the bill is that it undoes some of the high cost of bureaucracy that surrounds a workers' compensation claim.

The lawyers are fighting this bill tooth and nail for it repeals Dole vs. Dow, which allowed lawyers to sue everyone who is remotely connected with the case under the "deep pockets" theory. The legal fees drive the cost of Workers' Compensation right through the roof. Under Pataki's bill, an injured employee could still sue the manufacturer if negligence is suspected. Pataki and the Senate are in agreement on the bill. Assembly Majority Leader Sheldon Silver has proposed his own bill which would only reduce premiums by 2%

Looking past your nose

How much will tomorrow cost? This is a question all of us ask ourselves. It is a question that particularly affects people facing retirement.

When you are young, you seem to believe that somehow we will have the facilities to increase our income to meet tomorrow's financial dilemma. When you are planning on retiring or you have retired, you know there are few opportunities to meet the increases of new financial demands. It's a frightening feeling.

When we are young, we normally have the ability to change our circumstances. If we don't, we know we are faced with financial ruin. Most of us at one time or another have spent recklessly and faced the dilemma of going bankrupt, have changed our ways and averted disaster.

We know that if we didn't say no to our wants, we would not be able to meet our basic needs. This has happened to people of low income, but it happens more often to people with high incomes. We spend based on expectations rather than on the realities of life.

Government is very much like its citizens except it does not appear to have the capacity to say no to the financial demands that are placed upon it. Our government, particularly our local governments, the county, the town and the school districts, choose to ignore reality. They add spending

and would only increase benefits to \$516 by 1999. It's neither fair to businesses nor is it fair to the workers.

You may be saying to yourself, this doesn't affect me, it is a political fight. If you are ever injured on your job, you will be affected. Everyday when you purchase goods or services, you are affected.

Recently, we had a \$350,000 roofing project done on our building. The contractor told us that his Workers' Compensation Insurance was higher than the wages he was paying his employees. The cost of the same job in Connecticut or New Jersey would have reduced the cost by \$50,000 or more.

Workers' Compensation affects the price on everything that you buy. You stand to gain if this bill is passed. You might even see prices come down in the supermarket.

The high cost of Workers' Compensation in New York is one of the main deterrents businesses say is the reason they will not open up shop in this state. This means a loss of jobs.

New York must be competitive. The passage of this bill will go a long way toward protecting the worker and making business opportunities more attractive so we can get our economy growing again.

We urge you to contact your assembly person, particularly those who are Democrats. Urge them to pressure their Assembly Majority Leader to put his support behind the Pataki bill.

And why not?

program on top of spending program, and give in to every organized group without considering as to where the money will come from.

We have one of the highest sales taxes in the nation. It is so high it drives people in the state to avoid it at every opportunity. Our real estate taxes, in many cases, are higher than our principal and interest on our mortgage. How many homeowners are hanging on by the last thread before they lose their abode?

Why is it that we as citizens have to live with the reality while our elected officials have the luxury of ignoring our plight? Have our elected officials even given consideration to what cumulative

effect the give-aways will have on the communities they serve? What is going to be the cost of the pension plans in the future? What is going to be the cost of medical coverage for a lifetime and for a much younger, retiring work force? What will

be the multiplying effect of the number of retirees drawing benefits that will explode as more people are granted early retirement? We can't afford it today, what are the ramifications 10, 20, and 30 years down the road? Isn't anyone in government thinking about tomorrow?

God help our children. And why not?

New York State Legislators

State Senators:

Kenneth P. LaValle (R), 325 Middle Country Rd., Suite 4, Selden, New York 11784, 696-6900.
James J. Lack (R), New York State Office Building, Room 3B42, Veteran's Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, New York 11788, 360-0490.
Caesar Trunzo (R), New York State Office Building, Room 3B41, Veteran's Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, New York 11788, 360-3236.
Owen H. Johnson (R), 23-24 Argyle Square, Babylon, New York 11702, 669-9200.
Carl Marcellino (R), 220 Townsend Square Oyster Bay, New York 11771, 922-1811.

Assembly Members:

Patricia Acampora (R), County Seat Professional Complex, 1149 Old Country Road, Riverhead, New York 11901, 727-1364.
Fred Thiele (R), P.O. Box 9001, Wainscott, New York 11975, 537-2583.

Debra Mazzarelli (R), 228 Waverly Avenue, Patchogue, New York 11772, 447-5393.

Steven Englebright (D), 149 Main Street, East Setauket, New York 11733, 751-3094.

Paul E. Harenberg (D), 1217-2 Montauk Highway, Oakdale, New York 11769-1434, 589-8685.

Robert C. Wertz (R), 50 Route 111, Suite 202, P.O. Box 668, Smithtown, New York 11787, 724-2929.

Thomas F. Barraga (R), 4 Udall Rd., West Islip, New York 11795, 422-1321.

Phil Boyle (R), One East Main Street, Suite 219, Bay Shore, New York 11706, 665-0125.

John J. Flanagan (R), 75 Woodbine Avenue, Northport, New York 11768, 261-4151.

James D. Conte (R), 1783 New York Avenue, Huntington Station, New York 11746, 271-8025.

Robert K. Sweeney (D), 270-B North Wellwood Avenue, Lindenhurst, New York 11757, 957-2087.

Let the light in

When Governor George Pataki ran for office, he pledged to downsize New York State government, to bring our expenditures under control, and to reduce taxes. One of the avenues he promised to explore was privatization, particularly in the health field.

Last week, our editorial board was visited by a group of top administrators from Suffolk's community hospitals. They shared with us concerns, based on rumors, that Stony Brook University's health system would possibly be taken over by North Shore Health Center. So far, there hasn't been any official announcement.

They questioned why, if there are plans underway for this mega merger, the local hospitals have not been informed. Why aren't they being given the opportunity to look at this possible takeover and, maybe, offer an alternative of their own?

North Shore, a very respected health care facility, is located in Manhasset. It has been said North Shore wants to become accredited as a teaching institution, that they have had affiliations with some of the city hospitals but now want to strike out on their own, and become a major, downstate provider of doctors and other health care professionals.

The local community hospitals' mission is to provide normal, quality health services for all in the communities. A loose alliance of these community hospitals has been formed and they are studying the possibility of individual facilities becoming specialists in particular forms of medicine. This would allow routine day-to-day care to be provided at the local hospitals, but when specialized medical procedures require a specific medical discipline or highly expensive and advanced diagnostic equipment, the patients in need of these specialized services would be referred to these centers.

Stony Brook is a state run facility. It is a teaching hospital and because of state funding has some of the best technology and specialists working there. Currently, when a patient's needs are beyond the capabilities of a local community hospital, the patient is often referred to this facility.

The community hospitals are concerned about the future. And they are not alone. Senator Kenneth LaValle of Brookhaven Town and Assemblyman Robert Wertz of Smithtown share with the hospitals a concern for the future of health care in Suffolk County. They voice concern about a possible loss of local input and control in dealing with the future of our health care needs.

What would happen if North Shore was to take over Stony Brook and then decide to transfer the teaching facilities from the University Hospital to Manhasset. This would

have a tremendous economic impact on Suffolk, causing a loss of income and jobs.

What would happen if North Shore signed a contract with one of the major insurance companies and all who are covered by this insurance company had to use North Shore exclusively?

What would happen if North Shore decided to transfer services from Stony Brook to its Nassau County location. Would residents of Suffolk County, from as far away as Montauk, have to travel to Manhasset to receive specialized services that would only be available there?

What would be the impact on the cost that we pay for medical care if there was only one big provider? Would insurance rates go up or would they go down? Would patients have a choice in the doctors they use or the facilities that he practices in?

In a letter to Suffolk County governmental leaders, Senator LaValle proposed the "development of a comprehensive system for the delivery of health care for the citizens of Suffolk County, bringing together the strengths of the University Hospital of Stony Brook and the local community hospitals...a Suffolk Health Network created with University Hospital and its tertiary care facility at the very core."

LaValle urged, and we echo, that "it is critical that your support be known so that we will have a health care delivery system in Suffolk County, for Suffolk County, by Suffolk County--a system we can be certain will operate in the best interests of Suffolk citizens."

Talks about this possible takeover by North Shore have thus far, it has been reported, been held behind closed doors. Why? Doesn't the public as well as the medical community have a right to know? Media reports have been the result of planned leaks.

The administrators question, as do we, why Suffolk community hospitals are not being brought into the discussions? Shouldn't all of these talks be out in the open where they can be reported on by the press, and scrutinized by those involved?

There are a lot of ramifications to the public, to our community hospitals and to the state taxpayers, and even more so to the future of Suffolk's health care opportunities. We need the answers before any plan is a fait accompli.

We urge Governor Pataki to order that these talks be opened up to the public. This is a matter too important to allow any one medical institution or individuals with their own agenda keep behind closed doors. Let the light in and the truth be known.

And why not?

NOT

Isn't democracy great?

Our democracy is a wonderful way of governing ourselves. A democracy is dependent upon participation of the people. This participation allows us to develop our political parties, select and support candidates who believe as we do. Unfortunately, in New York State, democracy has been subverted by the political process itself.

Last week, Governor George Pataki announced his support for election reform. It's about time. Under the current system it is extremely difficult for a candidate to challenge the party bosses. It is equally difficult for an independent candidate to get on the ballot if the party bosses want to keep him or her off. Election law is filled with technicalities the novice does not understand and that many times ends up disqualifying their petitioning attempts for a ballot position. Pataki has recommended that many of these cumbersome difficulties be eliminated and the process streamlined. We are in favor of cleaning up this abomination.

Years ago, we were involved in a petition drive, using the Initiative and Referendum procedure. We were warned that we would never make it to the ballot even though the issue had wide-spread support and we had a fairly good organization put together. They were right.

Although I & R did allow a citizen to petition their government to put an issue on the ballot, the legislation and its

requirements had been written by politicians who deliberately designed it for failure. There were a number of provisions of the original I & R bill that spelled out the amount of days that each component of government had to execute their responsibilities. The document also spelled out that from the day the effort was started it had to be completed in 365 days. If each of the provisions took the allotted time, the total number of days required was 444. Obviously, the I & R mechanism was written for failure.

We have seen a number of candidates attempt to get on the ballot both as independent and as a party challenge to the "club house." They submitted more than enough petitions, but then had a good number of them knocked out on technicalities. What is a technicality? They range from the wrong election district for the petition signer, the wrong Assembly district, the color of the paper, the size of the paper and a whole host of simple mistakes that can be used to void the petition.

Recently, during the Republican Presidential primary, the party bosses made it near impossible for a meaningful challenge. They effectively blocked their hand picked choice from competition. This was a subversion of democracy in the works.

We hope with the governor's power and prestige behind reform, it will see the light of day.

And why not?

We were warned that we would never make it to the ballot, even though the issue had wide-spread support...

Stop beating the system

Mom and Dad work hard all their lives. They acquire a reasonable estate. They plan on it taking them through their lifetime and being able to leave the remainder to their children. Nothing wrong with this picture, it is the American dream, the American way.

Dad becomes ill and passes away and the family gets their first real exposure to the high cost of medical care. It drains the estate substantially. Mom is looking a little peaked and down the road may require nursing home care.

Brothers and sisters gather together to bemoan the fact that their estate may be wiped out if Mom has to pay for her own nursing care herself. Junior suggests that they have all been paying taxes all their lives, why not let the state pay for Mom's nursing home needs? The kids, with Mom's consent, transfer the majority of Mom's assets into their own accounts. They pay for Mom's everyday needs, nothing really changes except that Mom, technically, is indigent, a poor person without her own assets.

A few years down the road, Mom does require being placed in a nursing home. She claims to be without assets

and the state has an obligation to pick up her tab. The state is you and I my friend. We end up picking up the tab for Mom. If she is fortunate to live long enough, we will spend several hundred thousand dollars on her. Her kids won't have to part with a penny of Mom's money because technically, and legally, it is theirs. The kids don't

have any financial obligation to take care of Mom. They beat the system and we are paying for it.

Part of Governor George Pataki's Medicare/Medicaid reform package addresses this rampant problem. Recently a committee he appointed strongly recommended the devel-

opment of long care insurance that individuals would be encouraged to take out to meet their needs. He also has asked for a revamping of the law to preclude the transfer of estates to avoid having them attached to pay for medical and nursing home care.

We must take care of our elderly. We must stop the abuses of the system. We must also allow our elderly to maintain their financial independence without stripping them bare.

And why not?

The kids don't have any financial obligation to take care of Mom. They beat the system and we are paying for it.

Holding schools hostage

Our local schools are not getting state aid in a timely fashion because of the budget impasse. The schools are having to borrow money to cover their expenses. The opponents to Governor George Pataki's budget are depending upon this issue to force a settlement between Pataki and the legislature, a settlement that could be very expensive and that will continue New York State's rampant growth and need for new tax revenues.

We hope that Pataki has the courage to stand fast and not allow himself to be bullied into surrender. The legislators are up for re-election

in November. They want to be home campaigning. If we were Pataki, we would hold tight. We would call the legislature back into session every week until they have heard the message from the voters that they want New York State to downsize and economize.

Pataki heard the message, he got elected on it. Many of the legislators who want to see growth in the New York State budget, haven't. Pataki should put their feet to the fire and let their tootsies get toasted by the blaze they have set.

And why not?

Show down on the L.I.E

For almost 10 years, the county has looked at removing Suffolk County Police from patrolling the Long Island Expressway, a New York State roadway. Most major expressways and throughways throughout the state are policed and patrolled by the New York State Police. These are state roads and the state has an obligation to police them. The state has the same obligation on the L.I.E.

When the Long Island Expressway was created, both Nassau and Suffolk counties, at the urging of the county police unions, took over this responsibility. This cost county taxpayers millions of dollars a year.

County Executive Robert Gaffney gave New York State government until July 1 to put in a plan for the state to patrol these roads. He has threatened to pull the Suffolk County Police off the Expressway.

Three years ago, Gaffney had approached the state with a similar plan. The state requested an extension until 1996. They claimed at that time they had to work the cost into the budget and train new troopers for this responsibility. We felt then that Gaffney was foolish to give them this amount of time. We were happy to see him set a firm deadline of July 1.

25th anniversary plea

For 25 years, Suffolk Life has been asking that the town boards consider a very simple, people-oriented proposal: a reciprocal agreement that will allow residents of one town to use the beaches of another town.

The only town that can offer its residents both ocean and sound beaches is Brookhaven. Shelter Island can only offer bay beaches.

Each of our beaches is unique and different and when joined in unison, can offer a varied vacation land.

Each town guards its beaches jealously. Some don't let outsiders in at all. Some charge extremely high fees for a single day's use from residents outside of the towns' boundaries.

Beaches are our allure to tourists. Why close them down? Why make them so inaccessible? One of the beauties of Florida is that almost all beaches are opened to all people and guess what, most people go to the beach because they feel welcomed and not

threatened.

When we were raising our children in the Town of Riverhead, we well remember the hassle it was to be able to go to an ocean beach. We used to use the right ways until they were closed down. Then we were faced with either paying high, out-of-town fees or resort to getting a town pass. A one day pass when you are on a tight budget can be a whole week's leisure money. You are limited to the number of times that you can go to the beach and, in the end, it's the kids that suffer.

All towns should do everything in their power to make as many beaches as they can accessible to the general public.

For the 25th year, we encourage the town boards to consider at least a reciprocal agreement with the towns surrounding them. Try it as an experiment and let the public benefit. For the 25th straight year, please!

And why not?