

New faces bring new hope

The Republicans have held their nominating convention on the state level and have nominated George Pataki for governor. Pataki was the mayor of Peekskill, a New York State assemblyman, and is now considered a maverick state senator.

Pataki gained statewide attention for refusing to buckle under Senate Minority Leader Ralph Marino's orders to pass the New York State budget. Marino had capitulated to Governor Mario Cuomo and the Assembly majority leader for a budget that was good for the politicians and lousy for the taxpayers. Pataki said "no." He earned Marino's wrath and the support of "Change New York."

Change New York has been active over the last three to four years in trying to bring about fiscal sanity in the state by pinpointing waste, abuse and the abusers.

Pataki convinced Senator Alphonse D'Amato (R-New York), one of the state's major Republican powers, to back his candidacy. D'Amato pulled out all stops and secured the nomination for Pataki, and kept Herb London, the Conservative candidate four years ago, from automatically being able to run a primary. This may be good for the party, but doesn't do much for democracy.

We liked London, felt he would make a great candidate if he could have won both the Republican and Conservative lines. Running only on the Conservative line, or running a divisive Republican primary would have been a no-win situation, virtually guaranteeing a repeat of the 1990 race and the return of Cuomo by default.

But "unity" in the party, in Lon-

don's words, has been assured with his designation as the Republican candidate for comptroller, a move which will assure Conservative cross-endorsement of the Republican slate. With Cuomo's popularity at an all-time low, GOP unity and the cross-endorsement should make this year's election a closer contest.

This state is in pathetic condition. In just four years, we have lost almost 500,000 jobs. From a bond standpoint, we are in worse shape than any other state, which has cost us millions in additional interest. Our social service system is totally out of control. Education is in major trouble and homeowners can no longer afford increased tax bills. The only thing that has grown since Cuomo has taken over as governor is the size of the state government, the number of employees and the special

agencies that service government. There is no turning back the tide without changing the leadership. Cuomo has to go.

London is the one man who can make the difference. To remove himself from the race would be a tremendous blow to his ego but, if his principles are as true as we believe, he will make the right decision.

On the local scene, Suffolk Republicans have wisely chosen a new face as their congressional candidate, Michael Forbes. Forbes is the son of the former publisher of the News Review and Sunday Review, forces in their time in the Suffolk County publishing field.

Forbes has had a distinguished career in and out of government in Albany and Washington. He is bright and articulate. His candidacy should prove a sharp contrast to the sitting congressman, George Hochbrueckner, who has earned a reputation as being a stalwart liberal Democrat and an ardent supporter of President Bill Clinton on most issues.

Hochbrueckner has been able to skate by in the past by claiming to be a moderate Democrat. With the Presidency and Congress both Democratic, his true colors have been revealed and there is no hiding from the reputation of Congress or the policies of the administration.

As the campaign develops, the voters should be able to determine the differences and finally have a candidate that thinks and will act like themselves. We feared this year that the Republicans would hand the Democrats victory by choosing the same old political faces, who offered nothing new nor any hope. The Republicans have dared to be different. If the voters perceive that this difference can be important to them, new ideas, new philosophies can be brought to light and a change made in how government treats people. That change is long overdue.

And why not?

Beyond normal justice

Elected and public officials, upon taking office, are bound by a solemn oath pledging obedience to the law and the Constitution. When they enter public service, they enter on a higher plane than the average citizen. When they stumble and fall, they should deserve no special treatment. In fact, they should be exempt from the normal mechanisms of justice that are applied to the average person.

Because they have sought selection by the people, have pledged their faith and trust, have accepted the responsibilities and power far greater than that conferred on the average citizen, they must be held to a higher standard of performance and behavior.

We were deeply disturbed this past week when we read that Congressman Dan Rostenkowski (D-Illinois), chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, is negotiating a plea bargain deal to cover alleged crimes that are currently under investigation.

No public official should be allowed to plea bargain. They are either guilty or not guilty. There should not be any middle ground. The prosecution, if they have the grounds, should vigorously go after these public officials with a vengeance for they may not only have committed the crime but, more importantly, violated the trust the voters placed in them.

Likewise, those charged with crimes should be able to put up the most valid defense, and if the prosecution cannot make a case that they are guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, there should be no conviction.

Most Americans look at plea bargaining with disdain. They are angered that lawbreakers, by pleading

guilty or making other arrangements, are able to slip away with relatively soft sentences. As much as Americans hate plea bargaining, they accept the rationale that without it, the jails would be overcrowded and the justice system would come to a screeching halt.

Public officials who have violated their responsibilities, their oath and their trust and are accused of having their hand in the cookie jar, do not deserve second chances. They surely should not be allowed to plead to lesser charges, such as a misdemeanor, when they may have committed felonies that they can be convicted for.

According to reports in the Rostenkowski case, the prosecutor feels there is an extremely strong case involving a whole host of violations, ranging from the theft of \$18,000 involving postage stamps from the now-defunct House post office, to al-

legations of the congressman renting his campaign staff phantom space and putting people on the payroll for doing no work for the compensation they were receiving.

If Rostenkowski is innocent, he should be allowed to continue to serve. If he is guilty, he should be punished and barred from ever serving in the United States government again. Under no circumstances should he be allowed to weasel out from under the allegations through a plea bargain deal that will never completely convict him, nor vindicate him.

Those who ask for the public's trust give up their right to be treated as an average citizen. They willingly accepted a higher plane of responsibility. They must always be internally on guard that they do nothing to violate this privilege and, if they do, they should be fully aware they lose everything.

And why not?

Welcome mat needed

Expanding the economy

What a difference 40 miles makes. The Town of Riverhead, which has suffered severe economic hardships over the last two decades, is doing everything possible to open the door to businesses and industry, particularly the resort industry which brings thousands of tourists through the area. Riverhead residents know the harsh realities of turning their backs on opportunity.

It was announced last week that East Hampton had been chosen as the site for an international surfing meet. The organizers wanted to hold

an 18-day event in the fall, which would help extend the tourist industry by two months.

The local surfers protested, as they do not want more people to know about the phenomenal surfing opportunities Montauk has to offer. It's their little secret and they wanted to keep it hidden. How unfortunate!

Did they consider the money that this tournament would bring into the community? The additional days that motel rooms would be rented? The number of meals that would be served and staffs kept employed? Did

they consider the overflow effect on the entire community that would be beneficial to the trades, the realtors and the area retailers?

The surfers do not own the beaches; they do not own the waves, which are in the public domain for the public's use.

We hope that the town board and the entire community puts out a welcome mat. We hope they do not give in to narrow-minded, selfish individuals who do not want to share nature's bounty with others.

And why not?

A message from the voters

A large number of area school districts have received a message from the voters in budget and board of education balloting held thus far this year. It would be wise for school boards, administrators, and members of teacher unions to pay heed to the message delivered by the voters.

A record number of budgets presented to the voters have been rejected by voters who have clearly stated "enough is enough." Continual budget increases year after year will not be tolerated. The ever-increasing tax rates are driving residents from their homes. They simply cannot afford to pay the bill for higher salaries, inefficient management, and wasteful spending.

Yes, there have been reductions in state aid, and yes, there are too many state mandates that impact on school district operation. The state aid formula for funding education must, indeed, be revised. But solutions to these issues have been sought for many years, with no hope in sight that meaningful changes will come to resolve these problems.

The immediate answer for financial relief for residents must come from within the school districts themselves. We simply cannot keep looking for more money. Those in responsible positions must look for every possible savings, every penny of waste. They must explore how they spend every taxpayer dollar, and justify each expenditure. There are areas within every school district budget that hold potential savings.

Just about everyone who pays real estate taxes, including those who send children to public schools are asking, "Why can private schools educate students for \$2,000 to \$5,000 while public schools are spending \$10,000 to \$15,000 per student?"

Why, today, does it cost the equivalent of a private college tuition to educate a kindergarten student?

Why haven't the students' achievements increased in proportion to the investment that the taxpayers have made in the school system?

Talk is cheap

Governor Mario Cuomo has voiced a lot of rhetoric about welfare reform here in New York State. Talk is cheap.

The Suffolk County Legislature passed a bill limiting the amount of time a person can receive welfare benefits to two consecutive years. The thinking behind the bill was that welfare should be a temporary helping hand to assist people over short-term adversities. Welfare should not be a system that becomes a way of life. Other cities and counties throughout the nation have implemented similar plans.

For the plan to be implemented in New York State, Cuomo's Department of Social Services had to issue a waiver and make application to the federal government for permission for the welfare cap to go into effect. Cuomo's Department of Social Services said "no." They are not going to sign off and Suffolk cannot limit its welfare programs as the legislature, recognizing the will of the people, had decided to do.

The welfare department is under the direct control of the governor. The buck stops at his office. Although Cuomo has talked, spewed forth rhetoric saying that after 12 years he is, at last, serious about controlling welfare costs, he balks at the

Why have the number and the cost of administrators increased tenfold in 10 years? Do we need all the high-priced bureaucrats? Are they there for legitimate purposes or has the administration become a burned out teacher welfare system?

Why should teachers be demanding raises when their average salaries are over \$60,000 for 180 days of employment?

Why do teachers think they are entitled to raises on top of annual step raises that are built into the contract?

Why should residents be forced to put their homes up for sale because of the real estate tax assessments that have outstripped their earnings?

Why should school districts be allowed to offer curriculum beyond the state mandates if the residents cannot afford it? Shouldn't all of these items be eliminated if the budget is turned down? Shouldn't an austerity budget only be allowed to fund the state-mandated courses that lead to a Regents diploma?

Shouldn't the social service programs mandated by the state on school districts be funded 100% by the state?

Residents and voters have a lot of other questions and common sense solutions to the runaway school costs. School boards do have it within their power to strip away the luxuries from the school packages but they have to have the will and the determination to do so.

They must look within the budget to focus on budget categories which contain questionable expenditures. Transportation is a key area. Many districts simply continue extending contracts with favored bus companies, without exploring potential savings by putting contracts out to bid. The costs for buses in various school districts differ so greatly it is mind-boggling. The Sachem School District pays \$49,437 for a six-hour bus. William Floyd pays \$34,768. That's \$14,669 more per bus paid by Sachem, from the same company!

In South Country a request from a Suffolk firm to submit a bid for that district's busing was ignored by the board,

first opportunity. He failed to put his words into action.

Cuomo would prefer to see the hard working residents of New York State pay exorbitant taxes so that those who are too lazy to work can have a lifetime of free rides.

Our system is sick when people who work must live a lesser quality of life than those that don't work because they have to help pay the way for others. How many working families have had to say "no" to their children for special foods because their budget cannot afford them? How many times have parents and children not gone to a doctor because they did not have health insurance or could not afford the deductible? Yet, under Cuomo's elaborate welfare medical system, those who are in it can go to the emergency room with every minor ache and pain.

Suffolk is trying to do something about its long-term welfare cancer. Cuomo is standing in the way. Suffolk residents have spoken through their legislators. If Cuomo is determined to thwart their will, as he has indicated, then the voters must dispose of Cuomo.

And why not?

based on recommendations by the administration. When asked why, a school district official told Suffolk Life, "We're happy with our bus company." That bus company was once locally operated, it is now owned by a Canadian firm. Residents of the school district are paying for that "happiness." Meanwhile, the district faces austerity as a result of rejection of its budget.

In a recent survey by Suffolk Life, many school districts stated they bid out their transportation contracts. In some instances they did, but years ago! Contract extensions with the same company, with stipulated cost-per-bus increases, have been the norm year after year.

When was the last time school districts took a long, hard look at their insurance costs to determine if they can achieve savings in that area of the budget? School board members owe it to their constituents to inform them as to what they have done to bring about economies for insurance costs, and in the matter of other contracts for supplies, equipment, and various items used by the districts.

Every penny of waste comes out of the educational lives of the children. Programs are cut while board members and administrators blindly continue practices of the past. But the voters have said,

The right to know

None of us like to think about it, but many people are potential carriers of the HIV virus. The virus can remain dormant in your system for years. You may have picked up the virus from personal sexual involvement, a blood transfusion or a contaminated hypodermic needle.

New York State has a policy of routinely testing every newborn child for AIDS. If a child is determined to be HIV positive, the information goes into the state's computer bank but, shockingly, is not revealed to the parents. Not only are the hospitals not required to inform the mother, they are forbidden to do so. They can't even tell the doctor who is treating the baby!

The parents are not told that they have a potential time bomb on their hands, nor are they told to use extra care in tending to the infant. They are not given any instructions to avoid any further spread of the virus through the family, nor are they told that the mother is HIV positive. Only Big Brother knows and those who can network the state's computers.

The state claims privacy is the issue. We will be damned if we can see where privacy has anything to do with giving medical knowledge to an individual affected or to protect the child who subsequently has become affected.

Who is being protected? Surely not the host, nor the child or subsequent children who may be infected because the mother did not know any better. Statistics indicate that 25% of the babies born to mothers with AIDS are infected with the AIDS virus. Without disclosure, mothers with AIDS who breast-feed their babies bring that percentage up to 90% to 95%, according to some medical experts. Subjecting an infant to the possibility of contracting the virus because the mother was not informed is cruel, inhuman, and tantamount to subjecting that child to the possibility of death.

"Enough!" If you want to sit in a responsible position, do the job right or step down from your post.

Voters in two particular school districts, Connetquot and Middle Country, delivered another message, this one to the union leaders of the faculty associations. Vicious campaigns were waged in both districts against particular members of the board who were not considered "teacher friendly." Such tactics have gone a long way toward destroying the professional image of educators. But the voters, much to their credit, rejected these tactics. The viciousness backfired, as well it should. People are smart enough to see through the actions of special interest groups to defeat, at all costs, those they do not favor.

Unfortunately, school districts have the power of "austerity budgets" to wield against the voters. All too often board members reschedule new votes, in too many instances with few budget reductions to make a meaningful impact on the tax burden. Those who make such decisions this year, however, should be aware of the growing public mood that "enough is enough."

The message of the voters will not diminish. It will grow in intensity until it is heard.

And why not?

This is Big Brother at his worst. The almighty-state that knows what is best for the individual rather than the individual knowing what is best for them.

State Assemblywoman Nettie Mayer-sohn has sponsored a bill that would require hospitals to inform mothers when their babies test positive for the AIDS virus. But that bill is being blocked by the chairman of the Assembly's Health Committee, Assemblyman Richard Gottfried of New York City, who has apparently succumbed to pressure from AIDS activists who oppose any weakening of the state's strict confidentiality laws.

Although Governor Mario Cuomo, who could make things happen in getting the bill out of committee and onto the floor of the Assembly, told those in attendance at a recent press association convention in Albany that while his "impulse as a parent is the same as Nettie's," one publisher recalls he also said reporting the results of the AIDS testing of babies "could be a negative," which "would do more harm than good." How? Why? Explain the logic, governor, that would keep such vital information away from a parent.

Why it takes an act of the legislature to do something that is so plainly right we do not know.

We encourage all our senators and assemblypersons to push to have this bill enacted into law. If the Mayer-sohn bill continues to be stalled, they should submit duplicate legislation in both the Assembly and the Senate. If enough state legislators put political pressure and fears aside, the powers-to-be, perhaps even the governor, who is already facing a tremendous loss of confidence, will get the picture and take the necessary action.

Write to them, demand no less. And why not?

There's no need to duplicate

Almost 30 years ago, Suffolk Life promoted the idea of creating a new Peconic County to serve the East End. The idea then and today should not be to duplicate Suffolk County government, but to create a county that only meets the minimum requirements under the state constitution. All other functions currently performed by the county would become the prerogative of the individual

The late Evans Griffing, a former supervisor of the Town of Shelter Island, was the champion of this idea. He was the chairman of the Board of Supervisors, which served as the governing county body in the days before the county executive and the legislature. He questioned whether we should have county government at all. He felt, we believe rightfully so, that county government was duplicating many of the functions of town government, and he

was a firm believer that the government closest to the people could serve the people best.

Connecticut and some of the other New England states were exploring the idea of eliminating county government and, subsequently, have done so. Each town now provides services according to the residents' needs and ability to finance. County government has been eliminated and the destructive and costly duplication has been done away with.

Under the state constitution, the county is only required to have a minimal number of public officials. A new Peconic County would not need the hundreds of bureaucrats that Suffolk currently has.

Those of us who supported the original concept of Peconic County wanted our freedom. With the court-ordered mandate of weighted voting, and the

probable creation of a legislature, we could see the East End losing its voice and coming under the domination of the politicians and power brokers from the west. This has come to pass and has resulted in the East End paying more than its fair share in taxes and getting less back in return.

We envisioned a simplistic form of county government only doing the things that were mandated by the state constitution. When the first study of Peconic County was prepared, the auditors and the authors of the study disregarded the founders' wishes and based the study not on the minimum constitutional requirements but on a full-scale replication of Suffolk County government. The report immediately was controversial.

Yet, even as a full-blown county the numbers indicated it was doable financially. To become a county, the concept must be passed by two consecutive ses-

sions of the legislature and then voted upon by the people. It passed the first year but, failed to gain support the second. The question was raised as to whether the East End had a legitimate 119,000 residents, the minimum number required to create a county. The boundaries for Peconic County had arbitrarily been set along the Riverhead-Southampton-Brookhaven Town lines. Supporters of Peconic County wanted the line moved to the William Floyd Parkway. This has always been the Mason-Dixon line between the east and the west ends of Suffolk. If the line had been moved as the supporters wanted, Peconic County easily could have had the required population. Over the years, support for Peconic County has dwindled, but recently has been resurrected.

In the meantime, the Town of Brookhaven has been seriously studying the possibility of creating a county out of that town. Because of its size and its population, it makes sense.

Counties throughout the state were created so that small hamlets and towns would have a centralized government that would provide the things that the individual communities could not do on their own. Most towns in western Suffolk are individually a lot larger than are the majority of upstate counties. As Long Island has grown, the need for a county government has diminished. Yet, it has constantly grown as the politicians have created huge bureaucracies and reasons for maintaining their jobs.

The Town of Riverhead had initially balked at participating in the funding of a new study on the issue. It appears now, however, there may be enough votes to go along, as they should, with the other four East End towns. Before they do, however, they should insist that two separate studies be performed. One study based upon replicating the current Suffolk County government, and the other developing a county government that solely meets the mandates of the state constitution. We believe that when East End residents see the results of both studies, more and more will opt for a reduced form of county government, one that they can afford.

And why not?

A financially sound idea

Bonuses for productivity

Suffolk County legislators Paul Tonna (R-Huntington), Steve Hackeling (R-East Northport) and Joseph Rizzo (R-Islip Terrace) are attempting to put business practices into government. They have developed legislation that will reward employees for productivity and keep the cost of government under control.

We have several friends who are employed in government. They have often complained about the lack of incentive to do a good job or any show of appreciation when they go the extra mile in either helping fellow taxpayers or making county government work better.

Currently, the morale of most county employees is low. The Association of Municipal Employees (AME), the county's largest municipal union, has operated without a contract for the last three years. They have stood by and watched

the cops get huge increases averaging 36% through binding arbitration. They saw the Suffolk County Community College employees secure a contract that is estimated to yield, in some cases, up to 41% in increases. Yet, AME, which is the rank and file worker within the county, has failed to gain anything.

The proposal by these legislators would give these employees increases that would come out of productivity. The increases would be based upon the employees bringing in their department's operations under budget. They would share in the savings along with the taxpayer.

The proposed legislation also applies some restrictions on the negotiating process, some common sense curbs which have been long overdue. This will undoubtedly breed opposition by some union officials who would prefer the

business as usual system which has enhanced their interests at the taxpayers' expense. We can only hope the full legislature stands firm and acts on behalf of the taxpayer with this legislation which brings with it encouragement that there is, at long last, some relief in sight.

The proposal is unique, it's certainly different for government. The philosophy has been used extensively in private enterprise and has worked. The proposal should be aired thoroughly and it should garner the support of the taxpayers and the unions who must realize that change must come.

It's about time we saw some innovative and common sense approaches to the financing of government. The Tonna, Hackeling, Rizzo legislation breeds hope for us all that a new day is dawning in government.

And why not?

What is wrong with religion?

It has become popular for the media to bash religion. To picture religion, in general, as some sort of evil cultist movement. If you are religious, you are not politically correct.

Personally, we are offended and disgusted by this tripe. We have our own personal religion, and we encourage others to believe in God and act according to His dictates.

This past weekend we watched the news reports on Oliver North's Republican primary victory for the Virginia senatorial race. One of the announcers tried to convince his listeners that North was elected by the "religious right," whatever that is. He made the "religious right" out to be a bunch of lunatics and fanatics. My concept of what the media calls the "religious right" is a group of indi-

viduals who believe in God, believe in His teachings, live their lives moralistically, have a sense of values, do their darndest to keep their families intact, and take the responsibility for raising their own children in a value-orientated manner. What's wrong with that? Why should they be cast as a group of fanatics. They have their values, they stick by them. Their sin is they have the audacity to speak up and to be a counterpoint to the Godless society that the liberals are trying to shove down America's throat.

The same week, Newsday went even a step further. They had a cartoon degrading the Pope of the Catholic Church. The Pope was pictured as a knucklehead. The message was that he had rocks in his head because he stood up for the church's teachings that only men can be

priests. Those who do not subscribe to this theory have two choices. They can disagree but remain good, practicing Catholics, or they can leave the church. But, that does not give anyone the right to defame the Pope or ridicule him or the church's teachings. Newsday has never been known to either be pro-religious or pro-Catholic. This cartoon was just another insult to the people of faith.

The week was capped off by a front page photograph and article in the New York Times. The photograph was of President and Mrs. Clinton and the Pope. The headline read, "Clinton meets leaders in Italy." When I read the headline, I immediately thought of Clinton meeting with the elected officials of Italy. When I looked up and saw the picture, I realized someone at the New York Times went out of the way to

avoid paying just respect to the Pope. The picture depicted the Pope of the Catholic Church meeting with the President of the United States and Mrs. Clinton in Rome. This slight was just another example of how the media has been kicking around all religions for the sake of no religion.

We all think communism is a dead issue. It isn't. Part of the Communist Manifesto for taking over the world was the elimination of religion. It seems some of their agents are still at work.

This editorial will probably be condemned in some circles. We had the audacity to speak out on the side of religion and God. We are not politically correct. We hope more people will stand up and speak out along with us. We are tired of having our rights trampled.

And why not?

A new electrical company

We were discussing with some friends recently the devastating effect the astronomically high electrical rates charged by the Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO) have on Long Island, making it a place that many can no longer afford to live or do business in.

LILCO's rates are the highest in the nation, among the highest in the entire world. The Public Service Commission (PSC) was supposed to regulate these rates to protect the consumer and the investors. The investors have done well, the consumers are being forced off Long Island.

As the Public Service Commission

has failed its mission and provides no hope for relief, is there an answer? As glum as things seem, there is a sparkle of hope still left.

At the end of the Shoreham debacle, the state legislature created the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA). Its purpose then and now was to use its powers as an authority to ensure that electrical rates were fair and competitive.

Governor Mario Cuomo immediately sabotaged LIPA. He personally picked the chairman and the majority of the board members. The deck was stacked from the beginning, even though the law called for the members of the

board to be elected by the people, the ratepayers. Cuomo gave his marching orders to his handpicked board members. He controlled and successfully inhibited LIPA from achieving its mission. Cuomo and other Albany politicians have successfully stalled elections of LIPA board members, an action designed to foster their own political power, at the expense of the ratepayers. With a utility-friendly regulatory agency, the PSC, supporting every rate increase and financial scheme LILCO has devised, a ratepayer-elected LIPA board of trustees is the only hope our area has to protect its own destiny.

LIPA, as an authority, has the powers of condemnation and eminent domain. The original mission of LIPA was to explore the potential takeover of LILCO, but it was not limited to this single aspect. Electrical rates on Long Island are astronomical because LILCO does not have competition, is an arrogant quasi-monopoly and the ratepayers pay the price.

We believe it would be prudent for LIPA to not only explore the possibility of a friendly and/or hostile takeover of LILCO, but other alternatives as well, determine the financial ramifications of a takeover, and if it works in the ratepayers' favor, do it. At the same time they are studying a takeover of LILCO, they should explore the ramifications of establishing a brand new utility company from scratch. The answers learned may be surprising.

Taking over LILCO would require buying out the investors at least at the fair market value of the stock. Stock, in most cases, is valued by the market at several times the physical assets, one rarely has a direct relationship to the other. Profits and return determine the price rather than the real value of the hard assets.

It is more than probable that LIPA could construct a whole brand new system for transmitting electricity. A system with the wires underground that would prevent disruption of service from hurricanes and other natural phenomenon. Construction of a new electrical transmission company would create thousands of construction jobs and, on its own, be a huge boost to the economy of Long Island. The system would be new, up-to-date, utilizing modern technology that would reduce some of the overhead and maintenance costs of the old system. LIPA could buy its power from the old LILCO or some other provider such as the New York Power Authority, as well as other utilities. Customers would have a choice of doing business with high-priced LILCO, or a publicly-owned competitive utility who could shop for the best price, passing the savings back to the ratepayers.

LIPA, because it is a public agency, could finance the construction through tax-free municipal bonds at interest rates substantially lower than those financed by LILCO. LIPA would be free of most taxes that LILCO currently is required to pay. There would be no stockholders, the ratepayers would enjoy the dividends of lower rates.

LIPA was empowered to find a solution to the high cost of LILCO energy. As long as Governor Mario Cuomo stands in the way of a board elected by the people, no imaginative ideas such as these will come into place, and we will continue to pay the highest electrical rates in the nation.

To change this, a new governor is needed. One who believes that the people have the right to determine who sits on the board of LIPA, who has the will and the determination to find a solution to the LILCO epidemic. A solution that benefits the ratepayer, not the giveaway deals, such as the Shoreham settlement devised by Cuomo that has enriched LILCO at the public's expense.

Now is the time for change!

And why not?

You have the power

The skyrocketing cost of education has been focused in the news for what seems to be an endless period of time. Budgets, and the tax rates required to support them, grow higher and higher, year after year. While the reduction of state aid has seriously impacted this problem, the actions of local board of education members are the major contributing factor to the success or failure to control these costs.

Three examples of school board actions that impact on the taxpayers occurred in three local districts in recent days. Two added to the cost factor and will cost the taxpayers of those two districts, and another is an example of how board members in one district are striving, and are being ostracized for their actions, to bring costs under control.

Elections for board seats in the Middle Country School District were heated, with vicious charges hurled in print and broadcast advertisements sponsored by the district's faculty association. The targets of the charges were candidates considered unfriendly to teacher union demands. One of the incumbents, supported by the faculty association, was rejected in the elections by the voters. The week after that vote, the board majority approved raises for administrators and other district employees, in one instance those covered by a contract that did not yet expire. Why? Because the candidates targeted by the faculty association were elected by the voters. While one was an incumbent, two won't be seated until the re-organizational meeting in July. The current board majority, headed, by the way, by an administrator in another district, will change as a result of the elections. "Let's do it now, before they get in," was apparently the motivation for the right after the election vote on the increases.

The same thing happened in Central Islip. Two incumbents, the board's president and vice-president, were ousted by the voters. In a 1:30 a.m. action, not on the agenda, the board, in a split vote, extended the superintendent's contract, and also extended the teachers' contract, which was not due to expire until next year, and gave two raises of 2% in the first year, and 3% in each of the other three years of the extended contract. The two rejected board members voted for the contract extensions and increases. That, in our

view, is a final act of of arrogance toward the voters who said, "Enough."

In another district, Lindenhurst, the majority board members have taken a firm stand against step increases and longevity bonuses included in the current contract with teachers. The board majority voted to end the steps and longevity payments when the contract expires at the end of this month. That action may well be the forerunner of what board members who are sincerely striving to cut costs in other districts will consider to bring skyrocketing costs under control.

Step increases are those automatic salary hikes given to teachers for each additional year and educational credit accumulated. Thus, when negotiations result in a salary increase on a percentage basis, the teachers get the percentage increase plus the step increase, which can range from 2% to 4%, a double raise. Teachers on the top end of the salary schedule receive the longevity payments in lieu of a step increase.

We have long held that the double increase should be eliminated. The ac-

The first priority

Cut school taxes

In this election year, the state legislature and Governor Mario Cuomo increased school aid to most districts. Although these increases probably will not last beyond this election year, they are welcomed wholeheartedly by every taxpayer on the Island.

Most school districts have already submitted their budgets to the voters. Almost half of the budgets in Suffolk County have been rejected. The taxpayers said very simply, "We can no longer afford the increase in school budgets. We want the school boards to scaleback their spending plans, to cut school taxes."

This new state aid gives the districts the opportunity to reduce school real estate taxes, ensuring that the school districts do not use these unanticipated funds to increase school expenditures.

One of the biggest criticisms of state aid in the past that led to the reductions by the state was that every

board of the Lindenhurst majority is designed to make this happen. We applaud their courage. Their action has already evoked the wrath of the educational lobby. The majority members are seeking re-election in the current elections in Lindenhurst--the vote is June 29--and the outcome of those elections will have an impact on the future of the move to end the double salary increases, which have played a large part in the escalating tax rates in all school districts.

In the end, it comes down to you, the taxpayers. If last-minute salary increases and contract extensions by board members rejected by the voters don't anger you, do nothing. If they do, invest the time to attend a board meeting, express your anger to those responsible.

And if you think that double increases, step salary hikes and negotiated percentage increases, must end, support those who advocate that position.

The power is in your hands. Use it!
And why not?

time the state increased state aid to schools, the school districts found a way to spend it rather than reducing the real estate tax burden.

No one can misinterpret the mood of the taxpayers or their frustration with the growing financial burden which is making it impossible for taxpayers to live here on Long Island because of the oppressive real estate tax burden.

We know the boards are going to face the temptation to spend their unanticipated funds, but, they must face reality. The first priority of every board should be to reduce what they are spending so there is a tax base left to support our educational system. To increase spending because of this unanticipated state aid would be a dereliction of duty by the boards and a good argument to do away with local school boards.

And why not?