

Have We Learned A Lesson

The Urban Housing Development Corp., is on the verge of collapse. They cannot meet their payments on bonds that are due and, as a result, are technically bankrupt. Now Governor Carey is frantically trying to save this quasi-government agency by putting a strong arm on the banks and Assembly to bail UDC out.

The UDC was formed through Rockefeller's flim-flam financing. It is an independent corporation financed through the sale of bonds that are backed by the reputation of the state, but not their credit. If the UDC fails, it is the bondholders that take the bath, not the state, as was once understood.

Set up to rebuild rundown areas and to develop low-cost housing for those who technically could not afford decent accommodation the aim of UDC was fine. There is no practical way, however, to fund such grandiose schemes out of the regular state budget.

As a deceptive ploy, Rockefeller established this "innocent" outside agency to bypass the state borrowing limitations. Raising its own funds, UDC operated independently of normal state authority.

The UDC has been in question from day one. The management and aims were questioned as it was not responsible directly to the people and could do damned well as it pleased. UDC, for example, often proposed projects in the midst of a good area to the outrage of all people concerned.

So Raise the Fares Already

When you pull up to the gas pump and the attendant tells you it will cost \$11.50 to fill your tank when it cost only \$6 a year ago, you may complain but you don't expect anybody to help pay the bill.

But that's exactly what the MTA and our city brothers are crying for us to do with their request for \$273 million in extra aid to keep the price of bus, train and subway fares down.

We are fed up with their whining that we should bail them out because costs have gone up, and ridership and service are failing. If fares go up, so what?

Let the MTA raise the fares to pay for itself. There is no guarantee when you are born in New York State you will have free door-to-door transportation for the rest of your life. Those of us in suburbia who have to drive their own transportation: we receive no subsidy and in fact, are heavily penalized through hidden fuel taxes.

If the subway fare has to be a dollar, then let it be a dollar to be self-supporting or let the MTA trim back the

The aim of the corporation was to rebuild and create housing. This was all fine and good, but it took more money than the projects could return. The inevitable result was failure to meet its obligations.

Now the project will either fail or be bailed out by the taxpayers who had legal protection from politicians' overspending until Rockefeller bent the law to accomplish what he couldn't do under the established framework of the state constitution. The reason the constitution forbids this kind of involvement is that the people cannot afford it.

No matter how altruistic the goals of the UDC, its bills still have to be paid by the taxpayers and the taxpayers do have a breaking point.

Since Rockefeller went beyond the state's highest law, its constitution, we fail to see how, in good conscience, the state can now turn to the citizens and say you have to assume this obligation.

Those who bought the bonds did so at some risk. As in any investment there is no guarantee you will make a profit or even get your money back. The average New York taxpayer, especially in today's economy, is in no position to assume any more burden to bail out those who had the money to invest in the first place.

We hope the Assembly holds tight and remembers they are responsible to all the people and not just those who had the money to invest in a poorly conceived UDC. And why not?

cost by economizing. We had to alter our driving habits so we could afford the higher prices of gasoline -- mass transportation can do the same.

We can't think of one logical reason why non-users of mass transit should subsidize those who do. Let each one of us pay our own way, instead of looking to someone else to do the job for us.

It is the attitude of looking for someone else to pay our way that has helped to bring this country to its knees financially. If a country is to prosper, each member must do their utmost to be productive.

Yes, there are times when people will need assistance to all the general rule as in the case of mass transportation, you have outright socialism which serves to make all less productive.

We don't mind paying our way when we pull up to the gas pump. We don't like the cost but it is a fact of life we accept.

Those using mass transit should also accept the facts that trains, buses and subways cost more today and they are

going to have to pay more too.

Let's stop the crying and get back to basics -- raise the fares to meet the cost, work on increased productivity to decrease costs and let each of us pay their own way. And why not?

PSC Raps Us Again

If there was any doubt who the Public Service Commission represents, their ruling last week should have cleared it up.

They announced they were going to allow utilities to give a break to people who heat their homes with electricity.

This break, will be paid for by the remainder of us who have their homes heated with oil or gas. In other words, we will be subsidizing the utilities so they can sell cheaper electricity to their "better" customers at a discount while we pay more for ours.

The argument is these people have been hurt by the rise in the cost of electricity and they need some relief. What the PSC and the utilities fail to point out, is that these people are already buying electricity at a better rate because they are getting volume discount and we are not.

Obviously, the PSC does not realize we who have oil burners have seen our bills double in the last year. Although we have also been hurt, it doesn't seem to matter. What does matter, is that it makes the electrical companies more competitive with private oil companies. It looks like the PSC is taking care of its own, at our expense.


We had hoped under a new rule in Albany, the PSC would be made more responsible to the average consumer's needs, but it now appears with election dust settled, the utilities are still able to get what they want out of the commission.

We wonder what would happen if every oil electric user deducted this new surcharge from their bill. Just say, "Hell no, we won't pay so you can subsidize your 'better' customers." Think about it, now may be the time for a consumer revolt. And why not?

SUFFOLK LIFE
NEWSPAPERS

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Official Newspaper: Islip Town.

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willmotts and why-nots

David J. Willmott, Editor

So Much More To Do

It only seems like yesterday that I sat down to write my first column. Yet so much has happened in the last 14 years, there are times when I still find myself scratching my head in disbelief.

My dream of a good little paper to service the Riverhead area, has grown into one of the five largest suburban weekly newspapers in the entire nation.

In the early days, the thought of having even a dozen people working here scared the living daylights out of me. Today, there are more than 900 full and part-time workers employed at Suffolk Life and its printing and delivery companies. From a simple social publication, it has grown to become a full-fledged influential newspaper with the largest full-time news staff of any weekly on Long Island.

It still amazes me that this could happen. When you think of the billions of dollars in goods and services we help sell, the thousands of peoples lives we influence, the changes in government we have helped cause, it is frightening.

I consistently ask myself, "Why did it all happen.... why have we been successful?"

Yes, we have worked very hard. We've put together a great dedicated staff. We've dared to be different. We also follow a philisophy of honesty and giving advertisers a little more than they pay for. In short, we try our darndest to publish a great newspaper every week. But these are only a small part of the reason for our success.

I think the real reason is that Suffolk Life is your newspaper. We try to reflect you....what you are doing, what you

want to hear about and what you are interested in....in a language and style that is truly Suffolk County.

You write your own editorials in your letters. You give us ideas and leads for stories. You and your lifestyle are the content of our photos.

Even my editorial column is you. I don't try to tell you how to think but instead encourage you to think on your own. I could care less whether you agree with me or not, just so long as you form your own opinion and then act on it.

Being 14 is no easy experience for a teenager.

You are beginning to mature and grow up. You're eyes are beginning to open. You can see the struggles ahead of you but you have youth and enthusiam to dive in headlong into them. You even begin to learn you're not very smart and there's a lot to learn before you can really become successful.

As editor and publisher, I pretty much see Suffolk Life the same way on our 14th birthday. We have so much more to do, so many injustices that need correcting and battles to be fought. With the proper exposure and constructive solutions, life in Suffolk can be better for all of us. We do our part to make it happen, and you join us with your participation in the paper.

To the many people who have, directly or indirectly, played a part in the growth of Suffolk Life, I give my sincere thanks. Without each and every one of you, from contributors and staff, to readers and advertisers, we would not exist. And why not?

High Cost Of Dying

New York state is not known to be a good place to die. The inheritance tax is highest in the nation and the bureaucratic red tape involved in settling estates, whether large or small, brings only added cost, hardship and delay to survivors.

Mandated surrogate costs eat away an alarming proportion of the estate. By the time it passes on to the rightful parties, often widows and orphaned children, what might have been a sufficient inheritance is often not enough to survive on.

A friend of ours provided a good example of the New Yorker's plight. Within a recent six month period this man lost both his mother and mother-in-law. Both left wills of similar

proportion and complexity, and in fact, were drawn up by the same attorney.

One of the women passed away in Florida. On the same day as the funeral, he and another relative went to a special state office set up for administering these affairs. Within an hour all papers were signed carrying out the will's provisions. Even arrangements with Social Security were tied up since the office was in the same building.

The other woman died in New York. In contrast, it took a year to settle the estate and legal, tax and surrogate costs ate up almost 10 per cent of the inheritance, not to mention numerous days lost from work. As our friend put it, "New York makes it hard to die."

Dying is something we all try to avoid

thinking about, yet it is something we should plan for. Because people don't like thinking about it, death has become a very profitable business, far more lucrative than it should.

Just for starters, cemeteries receive upwards of a half million dollars an acre for the real estate into which your remains go; their opening and closing fees and maintance costs run into the hundreds of dollars. Funerals, themselves, that could be accomplished for \$500 balloon closer to \$2,500 on the average.

Then the real rip off begins...the probate of the estate.

First comes the tax man. He grabs off his share without mercy or conscience. Then comes the patronage-rich probate court with all its appointments and fees which eats out the heart of estates. On top of that are legal fees heirs must fork out to protect the very rights and rightful inheritance.

When its all over, only a fraction remains to be distributed.

This year in Suffolk County, we will elect a new surrogate judge. Instead of sitting back and accepting whoever the party bosses decide to be their doler of patronage, lets listen to what the candidates will do about making the courts serve us.

Which candidate has the answer to the long delays and the solution to make transfers faster and easier?

Which candidate will clean up the current pork barrel situation where political machines get rich at the expense of the deceased's wishes for his heirs?

One thing of utmost importance is that major parties must not be allowed to cross endorse on a judge for this court. We must be given a choice, so that these questions will be answered.

The surrogate is the one court we will all have to deal with....if not when we are alive, then in death. We must make sure the sorry situation is cleaned up now, lest our wives and children face legal robbery when we are no longer around to protect them. And why not?

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Unemployment System Must Be Revamped

Governor Carey moved a step closer to making unemployment insurance a full-fledged welfare system this past week proposing to raise benefits to \$164.50 per week and pay benefits on a sliding scale according to the number of dependents.

The original intention of the unemployment system was to provide some relief to those who found themselves temporarily out of work through no fault of their own.

Today the reasons for being out of work have little to do with the eligibility to collect. In some cases, the beneficiaries actually received more net income by being on unemployment than they would if they were working.

In addition, almost all incentive to go back on the payroll have been eliminated because liberal job rules no longer force unemployed to take employment when offered.

Under Carey's guidelines, a husband and wife who are both unemployed could conceivably collect the equivalent of \$20,000 to \$25,000 in gross income. They could if they wanted to take a vacation for up to a whole year. So why work?

We doubt the old fashioned work ethic is strong enough today to keep many people trudging to the office or factory, if by being unemployed one can live as well or better than by working.

We support the unemployment concept in its original form but detest what it has been allowed to become. We can see with Carey's proposal how it will devastate the economy. Money is the primary reason people work. If large sums of money can be obtained without working, people won't work.

The people who would pay for this proposal are the same people who pay for all the other liberal ideas. The guy in the middle...the man who is employed.

Technically, his employer is supporting this fund by paying unemployment insurance. Don't kid yourself for a minute.

Every cent he pays into the fund comes right out of your salary. He charges the unemployment insurance premium to the money he pays you as a labor cost in direct percentage to your paycheck. Instead of paying you, he pays the state for insurance.

In addition, he adds this cost to that of doing business and marks up his goods to cover the added expense. When you buy anything made or produced in New York, the price includes a piece of the unemployment insurance cost.

There is no Santa Claus. As with other services provided to us by government, the people ultimately have to pay the bill.

For Carey's proposal to make sense, it must also be accompanied by a return to unemployment's original concept of tiding a worker over temporarily.

To be eligible to receive benefits a worker must accept any job offered even if it is out of his field of work and below his original station. If the pay for that work is less than the proposed unemployment rate then a subsidy could be provided to make up the difference.

The rules for eligibility must also be tightened up so applicants can't quit or cause themselves to be fired and still be eligible for unemployment insurance. Being in business, we have seen many cases of this.

We, the society, must also stop looking at unemployment insurance as welfare program. It is a self-sustaining insurance system, a business with a social conscience, but could quickly be sent into bankruptcy by confusing it with a welfare program. This is what's happening now and the trend will only get worse if Carey's proposal is accepted.

Before passing the plan, the legislature should be careful to set up the insurance system in a more business-like way and keep it from becoming part and parcel of welfare, which it was never intended to be. And why not?

Ma Bell's Out To Get You Again

Ma Bell is out to hit you where it really hurts this time. She wants to put our local calls on her infamous message unit system. In other words, she not only wants to charge you for each local call you make but in addition she wants to have you pay a time charge.

If the telephone company gets its way, everyone will see their phone bills skyrocket. We have all been conditioned to talk at length on the phone. Women, particularly are guilty of this luxury. Kids are impossible, particularly those newly in love.

Many women, however, are house-bound and the telephone is their only means for staying in touch with the outside world. For them, not being able to talk at length on the phone would make life unbearable.

The telephone company has just posted its earnings for the past year. Its profits were up substantially over the previous 12 months.

It was also disclosed that the profits of the telephone company in Nassau and Suffolk were double that posted in the rest of the state, and far surpassed the return normally allowed by the Public

Service Commission.

They are trying to get away with the gouging by averaging Long Island profits with the rest of the state. That means we are subsidizing those customers living all over New York.

The new system of putting all local calls on a message unit and time basis is primarily aimed at Nassau and Suffolk Counties where most customers, both businesses and private phone subscribers have opted to pay more for the unconditional free local calls.

This system will go into effect unless phone users protest in mass. We recommend that everyone write to the PSC and your local legislator. Put the pressure on them now or your phone bills will sink you in the future. And why not?

State Senate---First District
Leon Giuffreda
1344 Middle Country RD.
Centereach New York

Second District
Caesar Trunzo
New York State Office Bldg.
Hauppauge, N.Y. 11787

State Assemble-- First District
Perry B. Duryea
Tuthill Rd.
Montauk, N.Y. 11954

Second District
George Hochbrueckner
6 Wycomb Place
Coram N.Y. 11727

Third District
I. William Bianchi
25 Orchard Rd.
East Patchogue, N.Y. 11772

Fifth District
Paul Harenberg
P.O.Box 80
Bayport, N.Y. 11705

Public Service Commission
World Trade Center
New York, N.Y.

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