

# willmotts and why-nots

David J. Willmott, Editor

## Cohalan-Downey Race

Suffolk Life has supported both Peter Cohalan, Supervisor of Islip Town and Thomas Downey, Congressman from the second Congressional District. Both are superior public servants. We found them so appealing because of their unique character, dedication to the public and willingness to serve. Cohalan is a Republican, fiscally conservative, politically on the people's side. Downey is a liberal Democrat. Fiscally he believes the government should spend the taxpayer's money to provide the services they are unwilling to spend their own money for. Cohalan and Downey are 180 degrees apart on their political philosophy.

We had hoped the day would not come when these two fine public servants would face each other, because no matter who wins, the public

will temporarily lose the services of one man. But it was inevitable they would face each other vying either for the Congressional seat or for Supervisor, if not some place further up the political ladder. Both are ambitious and have aspirations of going all the way to the top.

The Cohalan-Downey race will be interesting and challenging. We wish both candidates well and encourage the voters to follow this race as it will be lively, interesting, and, for the first time we can remember, will pit a genuine Republican against a genuine Democrat. Both men should be able to make their positions clear, and in the final analysis voters will be able to see the difference and have a choice of a Democratic or Republican philosophy. This is the way politics should be. And why not?

## Swift Justice For O'Brien

Recently Suffolk County Democratic Leader Dominic Baranello called for governors intervention to order Special Prosecutor Joseph Hoey to expedite the charges against Suffolk County District Attorney Henry O'Brien. A group of O'Brien supporters have started to circulate a petition for the same purpose. Both want to see justice done, and permit the operation of the D.A.'s office to return to normal.

So do we.

We disagree however, with their demands. When Hoey was appointed, we sought out a very prominent New York City attorney we know and asked him his opinion of this man. He emphatically said Hoey was one of the most methodical men he had ever met, that he would not leave a single stone unturned in this investigation. He proceeds with due haste but cannot and will not be rushed into reaching any conclusions unless he has fully investigated every avenue. We questioned this attorney about whether Hoey could be reached or was

corruptible. We were assured that this was totally impossible. We also questioned his competence, his ability, his logic and his fairness. Again we were told that he was the very best.

Suffolk Life backed O'Brien when he sought the office of District Attorney. We do not believe that O'Brien is in any way, shape or form a homosexual. We believe the charges brought against him were a desperate attempt to stop O'Brien from being what the people had elected him to be -- an honest, uncontrollable, uncompromising D.A. who would seek out those who were wrong and prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law.

We are glad that Hoey is conducting the kind of investigation he is. Although we would have liked to have seen this whole mess end sooner, we feel when Hoey completes his investigation, O'Brien's name will be cleared and no one will be able to suggest that justice has not been done. And why not?

## Are Aides Needed At All?

The issue of designation of aides to the County Legislators has become a raging battle in Suffolk. The aides are supposed to serve the everyday needs of their assigned legislators, to do the detail work, the research. They are supposed to be more readily available to the public than the legislator himself.

As we revealed last election, some of these aides make more money than the legislators. Many are used as political flunkies, serving the re-election interests of the legislator and not the public.

We thoroughly question whether the legislature is acting in our behalf and by continuing to employ legislative aides. Do we really need to provide make-work jobs, obviously political patronage plums?

Suffolk County residents are suffering under one of the heaviest tax burdens in the nation. They are crying out for a cut-back in government with an accompanying cut-back in their tax bill.

This was the message the voters gave the legislators loud and clear last election, but, one most have chosen to ignore. The elimination of these political spots could save taxpayers over \$100,000. This may seem to be only peanuts since the Suffolk County budget is almost one-half billion dollars. This action would demonstrate to other sections of the County bureaucracy they have taken the bull by the horns to cut back needless expense, and expect all other branches and departments to do the same.

The Suffolk County Legislature must find a way to reduce the County budget or it will be faced with the same unpleasant task as Nassau County -- raising the sales tax. The constantly widening spiral of County spending must be stopped. You as a resident of Suffolk County can make your county legislators aware of your position. Please write or call them and request the elimination of legislative aides. And why not?

## Are We Disposable?

How much is your life worth? Some people think your life is worth a lot less than the lives of your brothers in New York City.

The New York City Health Department banned the transportation of potentially lethal radioactive atomic waste products through the city because of the danger to the residents. Brookhaven National Laboratory will begin transporting radioactive waste from experimental projects by ferry to Connecticut to make the overland journey to a federal reprocessing plant, without travelling through city limits. LILCO will face the same problem of waste disposal for its reactors.


For the life of me, I cannot figure out why the lives of Suffolk residents are not as important and do not deserve the same protection as the lives of city residents. The same danger from a reactor breakdown exist whether it is being built in the heart of New York or near the tip of Eastern Long Island. The same potential danger from lethal atomic waste exists for the residents of Orient Point as well as for the residents of Queens.

Personally, I am tired of being considered a second class citizen whose life is worth less than that of someone who lives in the city. If my life is disposable, then so are theirs. But should we not be thinking that all our lives are too valuable to be placed in jeopardy? Should we not re-evaluate all aspects of the atomic energy industry and the frightening implications of an accident?

How much is your life worth? Are you willing to have someone dispose of it, or place it in danger because you live in Eastern Long Island and not in the middle of Manhattan? And why not?

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# Fifteen Years Of Serving Suffolk

This edition will commemorate our 15th anniversary, fifteen years of being Suffolk County residents' newspaper.

It seems only yesterday Suffolk Life was a dream in the back of my head, a goal that probably never would be reached, a need that never would be fulfilled. I was not a journalist, an artist, or even a newspaper advertising salesman. I was working in the fringes of advertising trying to find a place for myself. I recognized the need for a newspaper that would give total saturation to an advertiser's message.

I also recognized the fact that most of the weekly newspapers were controlled politically, and were not getting the story told. The established newspapers traditionally ignored the everyday resident and concentrated on the politically powerful and the prominent citizen. It was more important for the editor and publisher of these newspapers to be invited to the right cocktail party than it was to report about the everyday happenings in their readers' lives.

I decided because of my limited resources, to

publish a paper that would have a strong, controversial editorial column, and a letter to the editor column where the average person could write his own editorial, and publish pictures of their events.

The first editorial I sat down to write took days. Words just would not come and as deadline approached, I was utterly frustrated. A good friend, Frank Mooney, a Daily News reporter, and editor and publisher of the Main Street Press in Patchogue, came to my rescue. I remember him telling me to forget all the rules, write how I feel, be honest and put it in every-day language. It may not come out a literary masterpiece, he remarked, but readers will recognize the sincerity of it.

For the initial edition I took all the pictures myself. They were taken with a used \$20.00 Polaroid camera. My knees still knock when I think of the first time I stood up in front of people

and snapped their pictures, and the torture (to me) of having to go up and ask their names and jot them down in a pad for the captions.

I found a centrally located printer down in Nassau County who would do composition and printing. The printer expected to receive ads completely laid out, copy written to professional standards, and they took it from there and produced the paper. My insecurity showed and I am sure they had a ball with me during the printing of my first edition.

I remember so vividly looking over the first paper as it came off the press. From professional standards it was pretty much hodge podge, but to me it was the most beautiful thing in the world. It was something I had committed myself 100 per cent to, worked as I have never worked before, and it was a proud moment in my life.

Suffolk Life has come a long way from its early days. We have had some tough times and some good ones. I have made some brilliant decisions and some absolutely horrendous mistakes. But somehow through these past 15 years we have endured, and today Suffolk Life is publishing on both Sunday and Wednesday with a combined audited circulation of over 335,000.

Suffolk Life directly affects over 1500 people's lives when you count the total number of people involved on the staff, our printing corporation, Ad-View, and our distribution company-We Deliver. This alone makes it a tremendous responsibility, but even more of a responsibility than the people who bring you Suffolk Life is our responsibility to the public.

It is only recently I have come fully to realize the tremendous impact Suffolk Life has on the community and its citizens. The implications are almost frightening. I take this responsibility very seriously and if there is one pledge I can make on a 15th anniversary it is that I will do everything in my power never to betray the trust you have placed in us. For the trust of any one individual who looks to Suffolk Life for information, for direction, is most valuable to us.

In fifteen years we have grown up. We are a large business but we have not forgotten our initial purpose and that is to serve you. This will continue to be the policy of Suffolk Life as long as I am the editor and publisher. And why not?

## Otis Pike-The Man

I have known Otis for a good many years and in many different capacities. As a boy I pumped gas into his car, oil into his house and shot ducks with him at a pond where a conservation officer had the audacity to accuse him of baiting.

I worked on his first Congressional campaign and he lost. This was before I could vote. I worked on his second campaign and sat in his living room on election night and savored the sweet smell of victory in the wee hours of the morning.

I know his wife, Doris and his kids. We live on the same street. He is in a low tax district and I am in the high. You must remember that he was a member of the Town Board once during his career. But that's not the real reason why the tax rate is different. Otis's home, as those that surround it, were built probably before he was born. Where my house is built, there were woods where I played as a boy. Newer houses pay higher taxes.

I have watched Otis' career in Congress with great interest; first as a citizen and personal acquaintance, then as a newspaper editor where I had to take the blinders off and be objective. My professional opinion of Otis is, he is one of the sharpest, shrewdest and most brilliant members of Congress.

He is too damn liberal for my taste, but I prefer to have a Congressman who differs with me philosophically but is bright and honest rather than dumb and corruptible. Some election years I have supported him, some years I haven't. One year I was darn tempted to endorse Mickey Mouse. Otis knows this. I know at times he has been livid with me and at other times happy with what I have written. He can take the good with the bad as well as dish it out.

Otis, this past fall, was appointed chairman of a committee to investigate the workings of the C.I.A. Overnight Otis became a national name. His picture and his words appeared almost daily in newspapers, magazines and on television. Otis handled the investigation with the frankness, the honesty and the professionalism for which he is noted.

But he was up against more than the C.I.A. He was up against more than the White House. He was up against the great Washington bureaucracy fighting for its own survival. What Otis found in his investigation was a branch of

our government that was not operated by the people. It was above the citizens and above the constitution that each federal employee is pledged to uphold.

He found a staggering waste of our money and we think he found out the average citizen doesn't mean much to the government because he found out a Congressman doesn't mean much to the bureaucracy that has been created by himself and his peers.

This bureaucracy is now attempting to tear him down and ruin his credibility. First they accused him of wanting to leak sensitive security information, then they accused him of leaking his report, when this report could have been leaked just as easily by the White House or the State Department.

Now the C.I.A. has accused Pike and his committee of losing or failing to return top secret documents that had been subpoenaed by his committee from the C.I.A. Finally, after forcing Pike to labor under this accusation, the C.I.A. admitted these documents were in fact in the C.I.A.'s possession all along. The few remaining unaccounted-for documents will probably show up the same way the others appeared.

In the meantime the damage has been done to Pike's reputation and that of his committee members. Pike will be vindicated in the long run because questions that keep coming to our mind have not been answered. Why doesn't our government allow Pike's report to Congress to be made public? Why, even after they had these reports classified as secret, did they set out to dismantle the credibility of the investigation? What are they trying to hide? Who are they trying to protect?

I have got the feeling Otis has the answers to these questions. In his own way and on a day of his choosing and in the famous Pike style, he will answer.

In the mean time he must be as frustrated as many of his constituents have been in attempting to deal with the government from a position of logic and common sense. Maybe for Otis's sake and for the sake of America it is good that at least one of Congress' senior members now knows first-hand the utter frustration we all feel in dealing with government. I believe Otis will come out of this with flying colors as he always has in the past. And why not?


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## King John's Slip Is Showing

'Twas the time before election in the Land of Suffering and the Great Budget was being readied. In his famous shell game, King John and his mystical wonder took a real deficit and made it appear as a surplus.

As you recall, one lonely voice questioned his mystical powers and asked how it might come to be. The clamoring and the uproar in the Great Hall of Unreality drowned out his voice and he was shouted down. How can anyone, particularly a lowly peasant, question the greatest king of them all? Have faith they told him, King John would not lie to you. This lowly one's voice went unheard and the masses, believing the mystical one, returned him to office by a handsome margin.

As the snows covered the Kingdom of Suffering, the Wind of Ill Deceit that was rising reached the ears of the masses. Queen Mary was to use her Health Department to help raise additional taxes. King John instructed the Queen to levy unscrupulous fees on the people.

"Call them fees," he said, "and they will not know they are being taxed. They will pay another nickel or dime for a cup of coffee to their local restaurant or dining place and not know the merchant has to charge it because we are charging the restaurants up to \$250. in fees each time we inspect their facilities. What a sweet plan it is because we can inspect these restaurants any time and as often as we like. What think you of a household inspection fee as well? These stupid peasants are so confused at closing time when they purchase homes they won't know they are paying King John an additional tax. And on and on it went during those dreary days in January.

With the first signs of Spring, as the masses were emerging from their homes, another voice was heard in the Great Hall of Unreality. One of the King's men of the loyal opposition, Sir Doctor, has also questioned what went on during the Great Shell game. He now sees what he could not see then. He even sees King John's \$3,000,000 surplus become a 30 million deficit.

King John answered the questions by saying, "What can you expect from the loyal opposition? They are not clever enough to understand my trick." Or perhaps King John's mystical powers are beginning to wane, and he will have to come up with real money to replace the fake or face the same calamity that the Great Kingdom of New York faced last year.

Oh! ye of little faith in the Land of Suffering, be thou prepared to receive a royal tax levy that will knock thy socks off. For thou seest, the great magician will have run out of tricks and be about ready to say to thee, "It's time we knocked off this magic stuff. Ask thyself not what thy county can do for thee but what thee can do for thy county." And thou, as true-blue patriotic citizens, shall give up the coins you labored for in his vineyards to buy your Saturday night six-pack of beer and help John pay for his past mistakes. And why not?

## Can't We Be Realistic?

Suffolk County's parks system should be the pride and joy of every resident of Eastern Long Island. We are paying enough taxes for this to be a reality. The Parks Department budget is the third largest in the County and is one of the largest items in the capital spending budget. The parks system has been smothered by the bureaucracy of government; it's outlandishly expensive and seems to be designed deliberately to limit the peoples' use.

I was glancing over the Parks Department budget last month. It was the dead of winter and snow was on the ground. There in front of me were the assignments of personnel. Park after park all but closed down for the season still has winter operations and year-round help—not just a skeleton crew, but supervisors, foremen, laborers, etc. You would think in a time of austerity our county government would have enough sense to make most of the park positions seasonal.

A few months ago I was riding through one of the county parks and stopped for information. I noted four men drinking beer and playing cards. It might have been their lunch hour, but I doubt it.

I have talked with park personnel and they have told of the total lack of work they have to do. Park personnel fall into two categories, there are those who have accepted the system and look for ways to avoid work and there are those who are as concerned about the waste of the taxpayers' money as we are. They see the gold-bricking, and the goofing off, but they are fearful of speaking out because of peer pressure and the ever present threat that they will be transferred from their present station to the boondocks as punishment.

We cite the example of one park employee who pointed out the vehicle in use at the park station needed Simonizing to protect it from corrosion.

He requested a can of wax so he could do the job and was told it was not in the budget. He said, 'Here I am in the boondocks with not a darn thing to do. I offered to Simonize the paint so it won't rust out, and they tell me to mind my own business.' This incident happened two years ago and today that vehicle used at his post is rusted beyond repair.

We see a number of other problems as well. The proliferation of 'No Trespassing' signs throughout the parks system is obvious. Here we have millions of dollars in beautiful land owned by ourselves, the residents of Suffolk County, and yet by bureaucratic order we have been forbidden its use.

Several of the parks have literally miles of fencing. It makes you wonder whose brother-in-law is in the fence business, because it seems unjustified to invest our tax dollars to fence us out of our own parks. To use the parks you must obtain a permit or pass from the Suffolk County Parks Department. The pass costs \$2.00 and is good for two years. We wonder why you have to shell out an additional \$2.00 to pay for something you already own and pay for through your real estate taxes or your rental every year.


We still wonder why the County Legislature allows the politically-in park officials to live in park housing at a fraction of the real rental value. We also wonder if these park officials are declaring the value of this bonus on their income tax returns as income.

We fully understand the need for rules and regulations and some supervision, but we question the overall operation of the parks system which seems to be designed to create man-power and equipment waste and deny the people who are paying the bills access to this vast wonderland. Isn't there one County Legislator who gives a damn about the people who are paying the bills. And why not?

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