



## Act Now, Fight Later

The maze of bureaucratic red tape as it invades our lives in many important matters is frustrating, to say the least. That same red tape - or more accurately put, apparent lack of concern - as it pertains to the recent discovery in North Bellport of buried material emitting significantly high levels of radiation, is criminal.

That material, whatever it is, has been hidden beneath a mound of dirt for more than a decade. Despite numerous expressions of concern, state and county health officials did not care enough to conduct a full scale investigation of a former nuclear waste storage site immediately to the west of where the buried material was found. It took concerns about leukemia, a series of articles by this publication and television coverage which resulted from those articles, to get the county to do the deep soil borings that should have been done years ago.

And now they've found something. County and state tests have for years given that area a clean bill of health. But those tests were always surface readings, they didn't dig. The state department of health gave the site a clean bill of health after the nuclear waste firm's license was revoked. But the mounds that have covered the buried material have been there all along, and have been pointed to as possible sources of material for a long time.

When the county found the buried material, they stopped digging because of the elevated readings and asked for help. They contacted state health officials because it was the state that licensed the nuclear firm. The state's response to date has been shamefully lacking. The state notified the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, since all matters of nuclear waste and elevated radiation conditions fall under that agency's responsibility. The state, in fact, does not include nuclear waste on its hazardous materials list because of the NRC's jurisdiction on such matters.

A meeting was held last Friday between county, state and NRC officials to come up with a solution to the local problem. The county virtually pleaded for technical help from the NRC. What it got in response is a statement from an NRC official "I can't provide evaluation on that

without politically stepping on an awful lot of toes."

The public be damned! Political consideration is the top priority!

The NRC is the very same agency that is currently holding the future of Suffolk County in its hands. It is that agency that will permit or reject the licensing of the Shoreham nuclear power plant. It is that agency that has been, supposedly, overseeing the construction of that plant and inspecting its components. And it is that agency that will deal with problems of radiation, from an accident or leakage of radiation from that facility during its operation.

That being the case, we're in big trouble! If political consideration is the excuse for doing nothing in the matter of buried waste in North Bellport, what in God's name will happen in the event of an accident at Shoreham? Who will we look to for help if not to the regulatory agency established to protect the public from nuclear calamity? Will the horrors of the China Syndrome become a reality on Long Island? Who will prevent it, if not the NRC? LILCO? County and state officials who have looked the other way for more than a decade?

How about the state legislature? Surely our locally-elected representatives should be concerned about buried materials giving off elevated radiation readings? Don't bet on it. Assemblyman William Bianchi of Bellport - a community which is downstream of the groundwater flow which passes under this site - reports, "They don't seem too excited about this in Albany."

And Bianchi himself was not excited enough to appear at the gathering between state, county and NRC officials, sending an aide to that meeting rather than attending himself. Of course, Bianchi, a strong supporter of nuclear energy and Shoreham, did appear at the site when the group visited the area following the meeting. But he hardly took a strong stand to exert the power of his office or connections with the Governor to help resolve the problem.

We realize the county does not have the expertise to deal with the technicalities of the North Bellport problem. We would have hoped that the scientific experts at Brookhaven National Laboratory might have

entered the picture immediately - since nuclear is their expertise - and volunteered their services. Since they reportedly utilized the services of the nuclear waste firm that could well be the source of the buried materials, are they now afraid to get involved? Could it be that some of that which is buried came from Brookhaven Lab?

With the state and the NRC both trying their best to dodge responsibility and involvement in the North Bellport problem, it seems the county is stuck with coming up with a solution. We would suggest the county immediately come up with the necessary funds to hire a firm that deals with nuclear waste removal, and act immediately to excavate the

area to remove that which is buried. Let's act now and worry about who's going to pay for it later.

Health department officials have emphasized there is no immediate danger to health as a result of the buried material, and report radiological tests of a Suffolk County Water Authority wellfield immediately to the north of the problem area have shown no radiological content. We have no factual evidence to dispute those claims. But the lack of action on this problem until now has done little to establish a sense of trust in regards to our health officials, and the people are worried!!

And why not?

## Why We Fought

It's history now: C.S.E.A. coerced the county executive and the weaker members of the legislature into a contract that is neither just nor fair to all concerned.

We fought hard and we believe correctly against this contract. We bore the brunt of some horrendous actions by the C.S.E.A. We had our life and this plant threatened. We received in the mail, among other things, a box of dog dirt. We were the subject of a bitter letter-writing campaign. Many of our advertisers were threatened with boycotts of their establishments because they advertised in our paper. We must take our hats off to those advertisers, for not one of them collapsed.

We presented the facts concerning the contract in an absolutely honest and accurate fashion. We not only rechecked the figures being supplied by the county executive's office and the county legislature's budget review office, but also ran them by and calculated them with those that had been developed by the C.S.E.A. This effort required a substantial number of hours.

We were asked why go to those lengths when you are receiving abuse from all sides? The reason was quite simple: It is the purpose of any legitimate and honest newspaper that serves its readers to inform them, totally and fully, of what is happening, particularly those things that involve substantial financial ramifications. This contract will have severe financial ramifications on the governmental structure, the county employees and the taxpayers.

The contract, from its conception, had been badly negotiated. In former contracts, there were substantial hardships caused by previous inept negotiations. It was the union's and the county's intent to correct them. How they went about it was where the catastrophe started.

For employees to reach the top salary step they had to work at least 11 years on their job. In almost no area does it take 11 years to become totally proficient. Three to five years is more realistic, particularly for those jobs that require more brawn and fortitude than brains, training and skill.

Employees were entitled to a raise, a raise commensurate with the taxpayers' ability to fund, and in line with raises being granted to the rest of the workforce in the nation. The union typically asked for much more than it was justly entitled to receive. The county stonewalled. Neither side was willing to give in and

a deadlock resulted.

With this being an election year for the county executive and the legislature, at the eleventh hour the county executive's office negotiated a contract far better than even the union understood. When the dust cleared and the actual numbers could be put down hard and fast, it became very obvious to those who cared that the end result of this contract would be a huge shortfall in potential income, which will mean an increase in sales tax of 25 to 50 per cent, a real estate tax increase of up to 50 per cent, or a cutback of up to 40 per cent in the county workforce. Most likely, a combination of all three.

Real estate taxes here, already among the highest in the nation, will be pushed higher. Sales taxes, also among the highest in the nation, may well go even higher. The county employees making the least amount of money, as they are the last employed, will be the first out by virtue of this contract. Those employees everyone wanted to help will be the first hurt.

This county contract is a quick fix that will create far greater hardship and problems for all concerned. We had our numbers pat; it was easy for we who are not a member of either the ruling body of the county or the labor force to take the blinders off and see the ramifications.

The legislature was in the same position. It was not caught in the heat of the negotiating late at night when fatigue caused it to bend to unrealistic demands. It had the cold hard facts, with plenty of time to digest them before it was called upon to vote.

It was sickening to watch. Some tried to gain momentary political advantage; others without courage succumbed to the pressure.

Suffolk Life lived up to its obligation as a newspaper. We wouldn't now have changed a thing we did. We are sorry other newspapers of equal size tried to play politics when they should have been practicing public service. We are sad the daily newspapers, for the most part, chose to ignore this important issue. They had the staffs, the publishing frequency and the responsibility to inform everyone they reach. They didn't.

We fear that this contract will set a precedent for future negotiations with public employees that will lead to a real collapse of our governmental structure as we know it.

We can take comfort in at least knowing we put 100 per cent of our effort into informing the public, and all others involved, of the facts.

And why not?

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General Information

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR - We encourage our readers to express their views regardless of opinion through the Letters to the Editor Column. All letters must be signed with author's signature and address. We will withhold names on request and assign a name de plume.  
NEWS AND PHOTOGRAPHS Readers are welcome to submit ideas of interest and photographs for consideration of publication. All news and photographs become the property of Suffolk Life upon submittal and cannot be returned for any reason.  
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## They Dare Call This Justice?

The trial of Nick Poulos, district superintendent of the William Floyd School District was just about to start when Poulos pleaded guilty to three tax-related misdemeanor charges. That plea, the result of a plea bargaining agreement with the District Attorney's Office, was in full satisfaction of an indictment that included more than 20 felony charges.

The controversy surrounding this man and the school district as a result of a lengthy investigation by the District Attorney, the presentation of the case to the Grand Jury, and the often postponed trial, has split the community, and has tarnished the reputation of Poulos himself. Some may say justice prevailed. We say, justice stinks in Suffolk County if this case is a criteria by which it is judged.

This case smacks of politics at its worst. If Poulos was not guilty of the more than 20 felony counts on which he was charged, why were they levied in the first place? Were they brought to shut him up? Or to focus public attention away from other matters?

If there was no sufficient evidence available to convict him on the charges, why present evidence before a Grand Jury and ask the laymen who sit on that jury to hand up a bill or particulars in the form of an indictment. Why subject a man to huge legal costs, public embarrassment, and virtually destroy his reputation unless the facts in hand bear out the charges made?

But, if there was sufficient evidence to support those charges, why were they not pursued and allowed to stand on their merit in a trial. Why was the matter plea bargained away so easily after the county spent many thousands of dollars in investigating this matter for such a long time. Why wasn't all the evidence presented in a court of law so that all the facts, and the full truth, could be known?

There is much speculation in the community that the trial would shed a lot of light on some of the dealings within the Mastic-Shirley community involving the school district. Many in the community had already been served notice they would be called upon to testify. But the sudden manner in which the plea bargaining agreement ended that possibility, and foreclosed on the possibility such full disclosure would be accomplished.

Two things have come out of this horrendous situation. In many minds, Nick Poulos has neither been found guilty or innocent. Justice has failed miserably. The District Attorney's Office is either being manipulated for political reasons, or it is totally inept.

Never again should the District Attorney's Office be permitted to indict a public figure without hard evidence. Under no circumstances should such a horrible example of plea bargaining be permitted in matters of public affairs. If a man's reputation is to be damaged by an indictment, the District Attorney should go the entire route in court, and bring the matter to a full conclusion resulting in a conviction or an absolute exoneration.

Political indictments that do not come to fulfillment are nothing more than legalized witch hunts, a subversion of our system, creating the illusion that a man is guilty without ever having an opportunity to clearly prove his innocence.

The kind of investigation and indictment that has marred the reputation of Nick Poulos may well produce headlines, but do little to serve the cause of justice. In this case the District Attorney's Office has done a serious injustice to the cause of truth, and should be ashamed of its actions.

And why not?

## License Fishermen?

In an attempt to balance the New York State budget and to make up for the obvious forthcoming shortfall, Governor Cuomo has proposed an enlargement of user fees. On a whole, we support this measure, for it is only right that those who are benefitting from the services should pay for them. In another area, though, one that affects Long Island greatly, we find ourselves in absolute disagreement. That's the proposed licensing of salt water fishermen.

Salt water fishermen, unlike their fresh water counterparts, receive almost no services or benefits from the state government. They not only do not receive them, there is little call or need for the state to become involved in this fishery. Ramps, docks and marinas, for the most part, are provided by private industry, and in some areas by towns. The fishery itself is a highly migratory fishery whereby the fish can be in any state or international waters, depending upon the time of year and the temperature

of the water.

The state does not provide hatcheries for salt water fish as it does for the restocking of fresh water fish. There is little call for state conservation officials in dealing with salt water fishermen, who are regulated by local bay constables and the U.S. Fishery Management. Where salt water fish are migratory, so are the fishermen who seek them. It would be a bureaucratic maze for any single state to attempt to license them. If there is a legitimate and proven need for licensing salt water fishermen, it would have to be done on the federal level. To attempt to do it on a state level, where boundaries are not clear cut and easily identifiable, would be courting disaster and creating anger and hostility among fishermen.

Salt water licensing is nothing more than a ploy to create another tax at the expense of fishermen. Rather than create such confusion, increase the tax on boats and tackle, if need be. Do not add a whole host of new

regulations that can only create additional costs for the state and breed hostility and resentment. The proposal is bad politics, bad

government and a bad form of taxation. And why not?

## Financing Mother Nature

As you ride along the beach in Westhampton and you see the sea rushing relentlessly under the homes built on stilts, you have to ask who would be fool enough to have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in construction knowing that in doing so the odds were in favor of the houses being washed into the sea.

The fools are not those who own these lovely homes, but us, the taxpayers of the United States.

We finance the program called federal flood insurance. The program was conceived to offer relief from financial disaster caused by the unusual flood or tide. Up until this program was instituted, people who built on the dune line could only get insurance from Lloyds of London. We were told the premiums equalled 50 per cent of the value of the building. With premiums this high, few homes were built, the fools who built them had more money than they should have, and less common sense.

Last Sunday, we counted 46 homes without a dune line in front, waves washing under them. Most of these homes were built during the last ten years in an area that periodically has been washed out as Mother Nature tries to create another inlet. These homes were built in an area that you can almost guarantee would face

trouble. They were only built there because cheap flood insurance was available that guarantees the owners dollar for dollar replacement of their investment.

The dune line, initially, was far too sensitive for construction. Permits for houses should have been turned down, but were granted by local officials. With the availability of cheap, federal flood insurance, the attitude that prevailed was "Who gives a damn." The tragic part is the federal flood insurance program encourages the destruction of fragile building areas by the ultra rich at the expense of the hard-pressed, common taxpayer.

We as taxpayers not only end up subsidizing this give away program for the rich, but have to pay in taxes for the highway crews to clean up the mess and for the police who are on guard duty, 24-hours a day.

Federal flood insurance is a proper program when it covers the unusual caused by a freak of nature. It's a disastrous program when it encourages the building on highly sensitive, protective dunes. The program should be realigned and the insurance withdrawn from these areas so as to stop its abuse.

And why not?

## Reader's Opinion

Dear Mr. Willmott:

I am enclosing a letter I have written to Supervisor Joseph Janoski. It is an open letter to the supervisor which I request that you print in your "letters" column.

Thank you.  
Gerry Boneske  
Calverton

Mr. Janoski:

I feel compelled to challenge the attitude which you have taken concerning the emergency preparedness plan for the Shoreham nuclear facility.

You state that "my only concern is for the safety of the people in my town," and yet you have urged governmental bodies to approve an evacuation plan which leaves a large portion of county population to fend for itself.

The fact that you, as a public servant of one of the towns directly affected by the Shoreham issue, did not attend the public hearings on evacuation and emergency preparedness is decidedly inappropriate. Do you think so little of what your constituents are saying and what they think about this issue? We are the ones who know our island and how difficult it is to travel west when confronted with even a minor obstruction. In

addition, there were expert witnesses whose testimonies were in agreement with those of the residents. Your absence at our hearings is an insult to us, your constituents. You met with LILCO, but refused to come out to hear us. Do not forget for whom you work!

Take off the blinders LILCO has provided you with and look at the whole picture. Consider our neighbors to the east. Sheltering is not an acceptable answer to the threat of ionizing radiation. We, as a county, are in this together. It is obvious that LILCO has resorted to a "divide and conquer" tactic. We must look out for each other in the realization that the whole of Suffolk County could be affected.

You would do well to stand firm against the powers of the business community unless LILCO will open its doors for a full inspection and design review, and unless our whole county can be protected.

An evacuation plan may look good on paper, but just as nuclear technology looks great in theory, it becomes disastrous when we, as fallible human beings, attempt to put it to the test.

Sincerely,  
Gerry Boneske  
Calverton