

Our Safety Sacrificed

"Adoption of the proposed rule could, in a few cases where state or local governments do not cooperate in emergency planning, result in nuclear plant operation with less than optimum governmental coordination in emergency planning. In this circumstance, the public in the vicinity of the few affected plants would be placed at a somewhat greater risk relative to what would be the case if either the governments cooperated or the NRC adhered to its current emergency planning rules..."

Four of the five members of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission voted last week to take the initial step toward approving a change in NRC rules that would put the population of Long Island at a great risk in the event of an accident at the Shoreham nuclear power facility. The NRC voted last week in a 4 to 1 vote to publish the rule changes in the National Register, the first step toward approval. The proposed rule change permits licensing of a nuclear plant where local governments oppose it by presuming those governments would participate in the event of an accident.

The NRC insisted during that meeting that the rule change would have no effect on the safety of the public.

But internal NRC documents say something else. Those documents, in the words that appear at the beginning of this editorial, admit the public would be placed at a "somewhat greater risk" if the rule change is approved.

Both New York State and Suffolk County decided not to participate in a Shoreham evacuation plan after the expenditure of almost a million dollars and lengthy study and hearings convinced governmental officials that a safe evacuation that would guarantee the safety of the public would not be possible. That fact does not faze the NRC. "If a plant began operation under the circumstances permitted by the proposed regulation change, and all

administrative and judicial remedies available to plant opponents had been exhausted, it seems reasonable to expect that the governments involved more likely than not would change their position and cooperate in planning. The governments or others may dispute whether planning is adequate, but it would seem indisputable that the adequacy of a plan with cooperation will be enhanced relative to utility sponsored plan without it."

It is quite clear the NRC is not concerned about a workable plan. It worries about enhancing an unworkable plan as if that will enhance safety. It won't.

The real motive is contained in other comments in the internal documents. Noting the current rules have severe consequences where local governments refuse to cooperate, the NRC whines:

"Significant policy questions of equity and fairness are presented where a utility has substantially completed construction and committed substantial resources to a nuclear plant and then, after it is far too late realistically for the utility to reverse course, the state or local governments opposes the plant by non-cooperation in offsite emergency planning. A force abandonment of a completed nuclear plant for which billions of dollars have been invested also poses obvious serious financial consequences to the utility, ratepayers and taxpayers."

It's a matter of money, and the NRC knew it all along. After all, it was the NRC, and LILCO, who said even before the construction of the plant was approved, that all matters of evacuation would be discussed at the operating license stage, in other words after the plant is built. Once they build the plant it will be too late to worry about something as unimportant as the safety of the public. Then we can cry about the expenditure of billions of dollars that would be wasted if the plant does not go on line. The majority of Long

Island's residents have not caved in to this logic, even though some people and papers have. To the public and to us, the safety of the people is far more important than any amount of money.

The NRC is about to thumb its nose at the people of Long Island by approving this rule change, make no mistake about it. With dollar signs in their eyes, the majority of the NRC commissioners, who live far removed from the dangers they will impose, will change the rules to benefit the utility.

The battle has just begun. The NRC is apparently confident that the nuclear industry will be able to marshal enough forces to frighten legislators out of any legislative action to combat this move. But we're talking safety here, and we firmly believe that the people of Long Island will not sit back while the safety of their loved ones is sacrificed. The memory of Chernobyl is still strong. The battle has just begun.

And why not?

Another Year, Another Try

Assemblyman Patrick Halpin (D-Lindenhurst) has reintroduced legislation which would eliminate the loophole in the state election law that allows political committees to hide contributions from public scrutiny. The legislation would cause "housekeeping" accounts maintained by political parties to be covered under disclosure mandates. Hiding contributions in such accounts would be illegal. That would be a giant step toward putting more integrity into the political system.

We are far from confident that this measure will be approved. It failed last year, and undoubtedly will face a stiff test again. The reason is quite simple: the political leaders do not want to open their books. They want to be able to accept contributions from questionable sources, and then hide those funds from scrutiny in their housekeeping accounts. They want to do business as usual. They know full well the public would be shocked at the source of some of the political contributions. When political favors are now granted because of such contributions, no one can point a finger because the contributions are hidden from sight.

A case in point: Halpin states that the U.S. Attorney's Office is currently investigating the Babylon G.O.P. and has subpoenaed the records of the town Industrial Development Agency. In 1983, Halpin declares, the Babylon Republican Committee used its housekeeping account to conceal contributions of \$40,000 it received from garbage carting officials. Opening these books, which would be accomplished if Halpin's bill is approved, would have prevented hiding these funds.

Hidden accounts were originally set up to pay for legitimate operating expenses such as rent and mortgage payments, utility and telephone bills and other normal operating expenses. They are used however, to hide funds from questionable contributors, funds which are then used for polling, hiring staff, purchasing sophisticated computer technology, and other politically advantageous purposes to benefit candidates and politicians.

Halpin's bill has been passed twice in the Assembly, but has been stalled in the Senate. The Assembly is con-

trolled by the Democrats, while the Republicans rule the Senate. It is quite obvious, therefore, that the Republicans want to keep hiding contributions. As a voter, you might want to ask your senator why? Why is he afraid to open the books? What is it he wants to hide? Why?

Halpin's bill is the best chance we have of putting some integrity and credibility back into the political system. It's the only way to end the favoritism and special deals the hidden contributions can buy. If you agree, let your senators know that this is the year the housekeeping accounts must be opened, and that our local senators must support Halpin's proposal. If our senators fail to do so, they must be considered partners in the backroom deals the hidden funds buy. And that you will act accordingly at the polls when they face the electorate again.

And why not?

Thank You, Folks!

Suffolk Life's readers are the greatest, the most caring people in the world. We knew it all along, but that fact was brought home forcefully last week with the response generated by our plea for a loving home for a blind puppy.

The response was overwhelming. The first day the calls came in so fast the people at Bide-A-Wee, where Patch, a four-month-old Golden Retriever puppy that had been born blind was being sheltered, were too busy to count. The next day someone began recording the calls, and they totaled 417 in one day. More calls came in the following day and through the weekend.

Patch has a new home, where he can live out his life with love and companionship. And because of the great outpouring of concern, several other dogs with sight and hearing problems have found loving homes.

On behalf of Patch and the other adopted animals, we thank you for your concern. And for being the kind of folks who open their hearts to the plight of others. You're the greatest!

And why not?

SUFFOLK LIFE

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North Fork
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Medford



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Mistake Number Two!

President Ronald Reagan took to the airways last week to admit that all was not well in his administration. He cited his anger about "activities taken without my knowledge," but accepted accountability for those activities. "I am still the one who must answer to the American people about this behavior," the President said, pointing out, "as the Navy would say, this happened on my watch." While we applaud him for accepting the responsibility and pledging to clean up the mess that has caused it, there are other things happening on The President's watch that must also come under scrutiny.

For the people of Long Island, first and foremost is the matter of Shoreham, and the manner in which one of his federal agencies, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, is arrogantly bending and even changing the rules in order to push this controversial nuclear plant down our throats. Without regard to the lessons that should have been learned from the nuclear disaster we all know as Chernobyl, the NRC is knowingly, and callously, putting the people of Long Island at greater risk in their efforts to approve an untried and unworkable evacuation plan desperately put together by LILCO. LILCO's plan is designed for one purpose and one purpose only, not to safeguard the people of Long Island, but to slip through the requirements in order to get the plant licensed. Unfortunately, the NRC is their partner in crime in this effort, a fact clearly evidenced by the current rule change fiasco the NRC is now pushing through. That change would permit the licensing of the plant without state or local government participation, "assuming" officials would react in the event of an accident.

We must question if the President is aware and involved in this effort or if, as he claims was the case with the Iran controversy, that people within his administration are doing things without his knowledge. Is he too busy

to care about the people of Long Island, or is he part and parcel of the scheme to put additional risk into our future?

A couple of years ago, President Reagan wrote in a letter to Congressman William Carney that it was not his intent to force an evacuation plan upon the people of Long Island. Yet that is exactly what the NRC—one of his federal agencies—is doing. Has the President now changed his mind? Gone back on his word? Why? Is he in control of this situation? Or will this be Mistake Number Two, one that could prove very costly to the future of the people of Long Island.

In his speech last week, Reagan said about covert operations: "I have also directed the NSC to begin a comprehensive review of all covert operations. I have also directed that any covert activity be in support of clear policy objections and in compliance with American values. I expect a covert policy that if Americans saw it on the front page of their newspaper, they'd say, 'That makes sense.'"

Shouldn't the same apply in the matter of all federal policies? Shouldn't they all be in compliance with American values, and "make sense." Is it in compliance of American values to put the economic benefit of a utility before the safety of the public? We think not! Will the public say it makes sense for a regulatory agency to change the rules to benefit a utility when that rule change, by the agency's own admission, puts the public in greater risk in the event of a nuclear accident? We think not! Is The President being misled in the matter of Shoreham as he was in the instance of Iran arms and funds for the Contras? Is he in control of what's happening?

There has been a conspiracy to put Shoreham on line for a long time. It goes right up to the federal level. Lyn Nofziger, a former top political confidant to President Reagan, has been

receiving \$20,000 a month from LILCO to lobby for Shoreham. And he has. Nofziger was involved in meetings with former County Executive Peter Cohalan before Cohalan's sudden switch from opposition to support of LILCO's Shoreham efforts. How many other backroom meetings has Nofziger been involved in about Shoreham, and with whom? How has he used the power of his presidential contacts to benefit himself financially at the expense of the people?

Former CIA Chief William Casey was a member of the board of directors of LILCO before assuming federal office. He held stock in the company at that time, and may still do so. He was closely affiliated with LILCO officials in what has become known as the Garden City Country Club group. How much influence did Casey bring to bear in the matter of Shoreham. With whom?

Former Chief of Staff Donald Regan, ousted from his position in the White House because of his involvement in the Iran fiasco, was head of the Wall Street firm of Merrill Lynch, which has a big financial involvement with LILCO and the Shoreham plant. Was Regan also involved in behind-the-scenes activity concerning Shoreham? With whom?

Senator Daniel Moynihan has promised to hold Senate hearings on the Nofziger tie, and, hopefully, will explore actions of both Regan and Casey as they involve LILCO and Shoreham. Will the President support those efforts to learn the truth about the backroom deals that have benefited LILCO Shoreham? Is he concerned that people who gained power through their connection with his office have used that power to benefit the utility at the expense of the public? Regan and Casey are key players in the Iran controversy. They betrayed President Reagan in their actions. Have they also used their power to push an unsafe nuclear plant without regard to the safety of the public? The President should support any effort to learn the truth.

We believe the President to be a man of integrity and compassion. We find it hard to believe he would knowingly expose the people to the threat of another Chernobyl simply to benefit the nuclear industry. Thus we must assume he doesn't know all the facts, that the people around him

have buffered him from the truth about Shoreham. That he doesn't know all the safety allegations about the plant. About the many problems with the backup diesels, crucial to the safety of the plant should off-site power be interrupted. About LILCO's false statements about meeting testing requirements of these diesels, and how they lied about proper training for employees.

Does he really know concerns about the impossibility of a safe evacuation have come so late in the game because the NRC said they could not be discussed before this time? That the issue was first raised when the plant was involved in hearings for a construction permit in the early 1970's, but the AEC, the forerunner to the NRC, said "we'll talk about that later, when the plant is built?" And that LILCO supported the NRC in that position?

We would urge concerned citizens to write to the President to voice their concerns, but we have learned from past experiences that it would serve no purpose. We suspect his staff just shunts our letters aside to an underling in the Department of Energy who responds with a form letter extolling the virtues of nuclear energy, without any words of concern about public safety. We've seen all the form letters about Shoreham we care to see.

We are encouraged, however, by the reports that Mrs. Nancy Reagan was astute enough early on to realize that members of the President's staff were not serving him well, and urged changes. We believe if she knew what was happening in regards to Shoreham she would voice that same concern. We believe she is truly, and rightfully, concerned about the President's administration and the mark he will make on history. Surely she would not want President Reagan to be known as the leader of our country responsible for the next Chernobyl tragedy. As a President who had no concern for human safety. We firmly believe the NRC is heading him in that direction.

A letter to Mrs. Nancy Reagan, in care of The White House, Washington, D.C., might get more results. Hopefully her staff will show more concern than the form letter response we have received in the past. It's worth a try.

And why not?

SUFFOLK LIFE

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Massico/Moriches
Sayville/Oakdale
Coram/Selden
Hampton West
Hampton East

Mid Hampton
Rocky Point
North Fork
Centersuch
Patchogue
Riverhead

East Islip
Medford



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TDR: Disclosure A Must

The surge of development interest in local areas has resulted in a number of measures designed to control the growth. They include moratoriums put into place until master plans are updated, upzonings to limit the potential yield of property and, in recent times, the development of transfer development rights (TDR) plans which help preserve fragile lands while transferring development potential to other property. The TDR concept can be a valuable

way to preserve lands through the private sector rather than at taxpayers' expense. However this concept deserves much scrutiny—and full disclosure—or it could well lead to the land scandals of the past.

The TDR proposals offer some benefits similar to what is now accomplished with cluster zoning requirements—increasing density on one portion of the land while the remainder is left in its natural

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TDR: Disclosure...

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state—but goes one step further: transferring development rights to land in another location with a different owner.

The concept has value in that it allows for the preservation of lands and restricts development in environmentally important areas, with the dollars coming from the private rather than public sector. The TDR's are sold on the open market to the developers, who benefit by the increased density the TDR's yield.

In both Brookhaven and Riverhead Towns, TDR proposals call for the creation of sending areas (where the development rights can be sold) and receiving areas (where the TRD's would permit increased density). And that's where there could be potential problems that should be addressed before the TDR proposals get too far down the road to reality.

Zone changes have long been the source of corruption. Land scandals have burst into the headlines and have led to criminal charges many times in our past. It is often said, still today in a number of towns, that if you know the right people or have the right attorney, you can get what you want. Many have been financially enriched through zone changes, many of them controversial. The creation of sending zones, unless complete disclosure as to who owns what and where is a requirement, is a potential source of favoritism for those with the right friends.

There should be full disclosure of

all the owners involved in a sending area, both private and those of a corporate nature. There should be full disclosure of any corporation that owns land and stands to benefit from the sale of development rights. This should include all the officers and stockholders of the corporation. Blind corporations—the method used often to hide those who will benefit—must be excluded. This full disclosure must also include those who are involved in the creation of boundaries for sending areas, including consultants and officials. If a town official is involved in any way in real estate matters, disclosure of his or her clients who may benefit should also be required. The same should be true of receiving areas.

Each parcel of land within a sending area should be carefully studied to determine the actual usable yield. A 100-acre tract which contains 30 acres of swamp or wetlands should not be granted the same TDR potential as a 100-acre tract of fully useable land. Priority criteria must be established for land to be included in a sending area.

The concept of development right transfer can be an important tool to control and locate growth while preserving valuable lands. But there are loopholes that must be closed to insure the TDR plan is used to benefit the community and the public, rather than those with little more than financial greed.

And why not?

The Governor's Staying!

It was good news for New Yorkers when Mario Cuomo announced that he was taking his name out of consideration as a Democratic nominee for president. Even before he enjoyed a landslide re-election as governor, Cuomo was considered one of the front runners to be the Democratic nominee for president. After his huge victory and speaking out on national issues, most felt he would definitely be a candidate.

Those of us who are political watchers and have memories remember too well Rockefeller's quest for the presidency while Governor of New York State. With Rockefeller's eye off the state ball and on the presidency, New York suffered dramatically. Rockefeller instituted programs that would make him look good on the national scene. He became an absentee governor and costs ran amuck. Taxes were increased and new ones were introduced, including the sales tax. New Yorkers paid dearly for Rockefeller's presidential ambitions. We feared the same could happen if Cuomo seriously sought the presidency.

Cuomo has been an effective leader of the state, probably one of the best governors we can remember. We are in a very precarious

position and without his leadership and full attention, New York could teeter and fall the wrong way. With Cuomo's hands firmly on the wheel, we believe our state can navigate the upcoming hard economic times.

Cuomo has promised to return to the taxpayers the windfall taxes the state will garner under the federal tax reform bills. In addition, he is advocating over a billion dollars in additional tax cuts that will enable New York to become more competitive and stop the exodus of our highly-talented and paid work force, profitable businesses and industries that create jobs and opportunities. Without Cuomo leading the charge, we fear the legislature would spend their ill-gotten gains, and the people who pay for New York would flee the obsessive taxation.

There will be other times when the opportunity to run for president will again present itself. Cuomo might make a good president, but maybe he would not want the job.

We congratulate Cuomo on his firm and early announcement that now allows New York State to get down to the business of putting the "empire" back into New York.

And why not?

Letters to the Editor

"Resource recovery is one possible method"

Dear Editor:

One of the paramount problems facing Suffolk County today is the disposal of solid waste.

Each day that goes by, landfills that dot this island grow larger, and the ten towns in Suffolk County face a 1990 deadline for closing these landfills. Some town landfills are at capacity now and have refused to accept certain types of debris and commercial garbage, while other towns have drastically increased tipping fees to cover the costs of garbage disposal, including shipping garbage off the island.

Resource recovery is one possible method of resolving this problem. However, the construction of resource recovery plants is anywhere from three to six years away.

Right now we can reduce the stream of solid waste by adopting source separation and recycling. However, many towns are reluctant to begin a comprehensive recycling program without having established markets in which to sell raw materials. Simply mandating recycling will not solve the problem if we do so without regard to the market's ability to absorb these materials.

That is why, some months ago, I introduced Resolution #2137-86 to establish a recycling commission that would be empowered to

prepare an analysis of markets for recycled products including paper, glass, aluminum, tin and concrete, on a county-wide basis. The commission would also work with the towns in establishing markets for recycled and raw products, as well as in instituting a consumer education program on the environmental and economic benefits of source separation and recycling.

With the establishment of this commission, the county can act as a catalyst in assisting towns in resolving some of their solid waste problems. If the county could establish markets where recycled products would be sold, it would serve to encourage all townships to move towards source separation and recycling and thus reduce the amount of solid waste that must be disposed of.

Overseas markets offer excellent possibilities in terms of purchasing excess paper for recycling. In 1985, more than 700,000 tons of waste paper was shipped to South Korea, Taiwan and Canada where it was recycled into new packaging papers....

Sincerely yours,
Edward P. Romaine
County Legislator

"We have a real serious problem"

Dear Editor:

I am a member of a local drug and alcohol abuse program along with a handful of concerned people who many times, like me, probably say to themselves, "What's the use? Let's just give up and stop trying to get our friends and neighbors to come out and listen to speakers who know where it's all coming from." We have a real serious problem in our area, and all over the country. This is, in my opinion, a larger problem than Shoreham and the Bomb. This has become the enemy in our society.

The other night at the local high school I had the honor to hear Father Frank from Hope House in Port Jefferson give a talk on today's problems—reasons for these problems—the fact that our priorities are not always in the right place. Family concerns in many areas have gone down the drain. Rules aren't set down and followed through on. Respect for one another is a laughable thing, and in the long run leads to no self-respect. This man speaks from his heart and personal experience, as at this time he is a surrogate parent to 16 boys going to school, attending programs, and, most important, learning how to live and not die in this world that seems so hard to handle for so many people today. They help in the community and will most likely end up very worthwhile members of society—workers, voters, taxpayers, etc. He gets my vote for a decent, caring human being.

There are several on-going projects in our area, and we have all worked hard through publicity in schools and signs in stores, etc.

And still, the response seems to always be the same, just a few people turn out to listen to well-informed speakers, giving of themselves free of charge because they believe in this cause, but if a football or baseball player talks, the place is mobbed. Why? To look at a star and then forget the whole thing. We all like the glitter and like to ignore the garbage, but the garbage is here, and it is affecting all ages, young and old alike.

The little ones in school—yes, elementary school and up—are being fed booze and drugs; we even have school-age pushers. Now we get an uncontrollable habit, and this must be satisfied, so the easy way to get money to feed this habit is to prey on the defenseless elderly. The elderly, it seems, more than others, are easy prey to be robbed and sometimes killed on the streets and in their homes.

We need everyone's help including all the people that have the voice to reach more people. People in politics, clergy, service organizations, radio, T.V., and local papers to keep pushing articles on the subject.

Thank God that T.V. has made a big move with more shows and spots on this problem, with many fashionable people confessing to their problem and the ills that it brings.

Join us in this battle—you can get involved. I am involved with the East End Concerned Parents Group, headed by Judy Detmer at 727-6797, and I am not the only grandmother interested in this problem.

Sincerely,
Del Smith
Riverhead

"Thank you from a grateful person"

To the editor:

I would like to take the time to give thanks to the following people who showed me warmth and compassion. Their utmost friendship to me on Dec. 30, 1986, when I lost control of my car which went into a spin and missed the pole by a hair.

The policeman who was supposed to have gone off duty at 4 p.m. but was still working when my mishap took place at 5:15 p.m. and would not let me go any further because the road was so bad and there was very little visibility. He took the time to get my car, which

was now facing the wrong direction, out of the rut and also made sure that I got safely to the Manorville Ambulance Headquarters.

To Pat, Donna, Maureen, and Ray, who made sure that I was warm and fed for most of the night.

To Ray, who took me safely to my door and waited till I got in my house.

The words thank you do not seem to be enough.

Thank you from another grateful human being.
Mrs. Grace Richards

Hypocritical Shenanigans

Earlier this year, when a proposal calling for a special election to fill the seat of former County Executive Peter Cohalan failed to gain approval in the Suffolk County Legislature, the Suffolk County Democratic Party shed crocodile tears and raised a hue and cry. The Dems insisted that the choice for a new county executive should be made by the public, not by politicians. That's what they said then. But they're saying something else now in one of the rankest examples of hypocrisy we've come across in some time.

The latest position of the Democrats is contained in a brief before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, which this week is hearing an appeal of a lower court decision. The lower court decision, issued by Supreme Court Judge Morton I. Willen, said that the method called for by the County Charter for filling the position is unconstitutional. Judge Willen then, in a confusing and controversial action, said first that the governor should call for a special election. After conferring with the attorney representing the Democrats, he changed that ruling to stipulate the governor should make an appointment to fill the position.

Willen himself was confused by the switch. Claiming he had made the change to correct "a typo," he was quoted as saying: "I'm embarrassed. I corrected the error, I thought. Did I box myself in? I didn't think I did. I'll have to see what the hell I did in the morning." If Willen ever found out what the hell he did, he has never shared that information with the public. Confusion over the incident still reigns.

Confusion reigns also over the stance of the Democrats. If it is wrong for local "politicians" to fill the seat, how is it right for the governor to do so? Although they raised a storm about how the seat should be filled by the public through a special election, the Democrats

now say in their brief: "Section 43 (of Public Officers Law) provides the quickest and most effective means of insuring the stability of the county's chief executive officer. A gubernational (sic) appointment can be made immediately after a final judicial determination is rendered. A special election, which is the discretionary gubernational authority afforded by Section 42-(3) of the Public Officers Law would require a minimum of 30 to 40 days to hold the election and additional time to certify the results and swear in the new county executive. An extended period of time without a legally secure county executive is contrary to the public interest. Thus, Section 43 provides the most effective mechanism for filling the vacancy."

There is, of course, a more effective and least costly way. That would be to follow the methods stipulated in the county charter, which was done in the appointment of Acting County Executive Michael LoGrande as chief county executive deputy, and his elevation to fill the top seat with the resignation of Cohalan. LoGrande has served in that position since the first of the year, and by all accounts (except the Democrats, of course) has been doing a good job thus far.

While a special election would have made sense back in February or early March, what would be the advantage to the people of Suffolk County now, only a few months before we have to go through the general election process, to spend over a half million dollars for special balloting? How would the people of Suffolk County be better served if the governor appointed someone to fill the seat?

Do the Democrats really expect people to believe that we will all be better off if a Democrat, the governor, picks a Democrat, the choice of the Democratic leadership, to run things until the end of the year? Are they so desperate to get Lo-

Grande out of the office that they would stoop to such hypocrisy? Are they so afraid that LoGrande will do a good job that they must get him out of the seat as soon as possible?

We await with interest the decision of the Appellate Division. Hopefully that decision will be devoid of the political shenanigans that have tainted the Willen decision. Hopefully that court will uphold the succession process called for by the County Charter. That charter is the result of local action by local people, and should not be cast aside so easily by legal technicalities, if indeed they

exist.

The last thing this county needs now is to be put into the hands of the hypocrits who declare the public should have the choice—except, of course, if a fellow Democrat makes the pick. We need more integrity in government, not more hypocrisy. If the Democrats were really concerned about Suffolk County, rather than political gain, they would work cooperatively with LoGrande to help achieve the good government we all seek, and put political shenanigans aside until election time.

And why not?

LILCO's Deep Pockets

A number of years ago, when the mindset of LILCO was to be in the energy exporting business through the development of nuclear power plants here on Long Island, the utility made application to build two new nuclear facilities at Jamesport.

LILCO argued at that time that the two plants, which were to be built by 1990, were necessary to meet the energy needs of the Island. The Jamesport plants were to be in addition to Shoreham, which was already under construction at that time. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, in one of the few instances in which they have ever rejected such an application, denied the request. They found without merit LILCO's predictions the plants would be needed to provide necessary electricity. The plants, which should never have been planned, were thus never built.

But now LILCO claims the company spent \$138 million on planning this project, and wants to have the ratepayers foot the bill. LILCO management has petitioned the Public Service Commission for permission to sock it to the ratepayers by adding these costs to the electric bill. Last May, the staff of the PSC rejected all but \$16 million of these claimed costs.

In a sudden reversal, however, the PSC staff has now recommended that the PSC commissioners approve having the ratepayers pick up the bill for \$77.5 million. That switch boggles the mind, and must give cause for serious questions as to what backroom actions brought about this dramatic change.

The costs for the Jamesport plants were clearly incurred on a project that never can be used or useful. They were not prudent or necessary expenditures by LILCO for the people of Long Island. They were a

gamble taken by the corporation so that they could be in the power exporting business to enrich their stockholders through the profits they would have earned by selling power to other users throughout the north-east.

It is a blind injustice to consider forcing Long Island ratepayers to pick up the tab for this imprudent gamble by the management of the company. It is the stockholders who would have been enriched if the sham had been approved. It is the stockholders who should now accept the losses for their management's mistakes. Under no circumstances should we sit still and allow these charges to be imposed upon us.

The PSC staff recommendation that the ratepayers pick up \$77.5 million of the costs on a project that never should have been planned does little more than reward LILCO for a gigantic financial blunder. If the PSC stands ready to bail out utilities every time they recklessly proceed with imprudent plans, there is little hope that the utilities will ever become efficiently managed operations. If the ratepayers must continue to pay for the utilities' mistakes, the utilities will arrogantly continue to make them.

Governor Mario Cuomo must make it very clear to the members of the Public Service Commission who are currently in office that he will not tolerate any additional abuse of the Long Island ratepayers. And action must come immediately on senate confirmation for the new PSC commissioners who have been named by Cuomo, but whose confirmation is stalled by the tactics of Senate Majority Leader Warren Anderson, a staunch utility ally. The sooner Cuomo takes a firm stand on our behalf, the better.

And why not?

SUFFOLK LIFE

Vol. 26 No. 31

NEWSPAPERS and Suffolk County Life

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Cominack/Kings Park
Manatic/Melville
Saville/Oakdale
Coram/Selden
Hampton West
Hampton East

Mid Hampton
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North Fork
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SUFFOLK LIFE

NEWSPAPERS

1461 Old Country Rd. (Route 58)
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369-0800

News
Office
369-0810

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Supply and Demand

During recent years we have heard much about the vital need for affordable housing for our young married couples, and those within the lower levels of salary scales. We have heard a number of proposals put forth by governmental officials, proposals that require spending a lot of tax dollars so that all who seek a home can find adequate quarters. This governmental approach of throwing money at a problem is probably symbolic of the biggest weakness in our system of government.

To understand the problem we must first understand the term. What is affordable housing? It is different things for different people. What is affordable to a man who makes a half million dollars a year is not affordable to a man who makes \$15,000. We believe affordable housing is that which provides basic shelter for the average person. On Long Island this means following normal financial guidelines. A house with all related expenses should not cost more than \$625 per month, approximately 25 per cent of a \$30,000 annual household income. The cost for an affordable home is approximately \$75,000. Unfortunately, because of the lack of inventory and the prevailing economy on Long Island, most of the available housing will sell and rent for substantially more. That is the law of supply and demand.

The reason why supply has not kept up with the demand is the same governments that are trying to solve the problems of affordable housing today have created the problems in the past. The problems are not going to go away until the government undoes the damage that it has already done.

We believe our original zoning laws were developed partially in response to the cost of educating children, and the taxes that result.

Prior to the zoning regulations, people built smaller homes on smaller parcels. People already living here began to clamor to keep more people from coming. As a result, fewer homes, larger than before, were built on larger parcels of land, and the inventory of available homes diminished. This has created a situation where the value of a house has increased almost 200 to 300 per cent in a very short period of time. Many of our younger people can't find housing they can afford, and older residents are being forced to move because of the escalated costs of taxes and other expenses.

There are those who argue we must have houses built on plots of at least an acre for environmental reasons. While this may be true to some degree in areas where public sewers and water are not available, in sectors that do have both there is little reason, except the cost of education and other services, to forbid the creation of multiple housing per acre.

The amount of housing and its pricing is in direct relationship to the restrictions the government places on the land. The more restrictions, the higher the prices. Here in Riverhead, an East End town, the cost of these restrictions before the value of the land is taken into consideration is a minimum of \$32,500 an acre. On this acre, zoning for the most part allows only one home. Proponents of open space "at all cost" want it changed so that only one house would be allowed to be built on parcels of two, five and ten acres.

During a recent visit to Florida we were impressed with the degree of planning evident there. Well-planned and well-kept developments which have ample green, open space, provide reasonable housing for all. Shopping centers and commercial buildings are constructed on effi-

cient roadway systems, and they too include open space in the planning process. The law of supply and demand prevails in Florida. As one section is built, another follows. Although there is a slight appreciation in the value of homes, it is kept in check by an increase in available inventory.

The big difference in Florida is that the mindset is to develop its communities through foresight rather than hindsight. To plan for the future rather than try to manage the past. To develop property to meet the needs of people rather than to regulate and create costly roadblocks that slow down and stop development.

Many of the innovations that Florida is utilizing could be utilized

here on Long Island. Affordable housing can be created, but the mindset would have to be changed. Somehow, the needs and wants of humans have to become as important as preserving an insect or a particular flower that someone has decided is important to the ecology and should not be disturbed.

Like many Long Islanders, we are pained to see our children growing up and wanting to remain here, but not being able to because they were not fortunate enough to be born a generation or two before zoning restrictions put affordable housing out of their reach.

Affordable housing can be developed if we want it. And we darn well should!

And why not?

A Political Rip-off

Public scrutiny has been focused in recent days on the member item system employed in the state legislature which, according to some accounts, is little more than a political rip-off of the taxpayers dollars.

Based on information recently unveiled, the member item system—through which legislators earn gold stars back home for monies granted to local organizations—has become little more than a means by which legislative leaders use millions of tax dollars for political advantage.

Attention was recently focused on the system by F. Forrester Church, minister of the Unitarian Church of All Souls in New York City. Rev. Forrester indicated, in a lengthy report, his first experience with the member item system came when his church received an unsolicited grant of \$10,000, "courtesy of our senator."

The money was, he learned, "part of an \$89 million pie, paid for by tax dollars and distributed in pork-barrel pot luck fashion at the whim of individual state legislators. Weighing not only the propriety of a church receiving state funds, but also the propriety of grants being made in such a wanton fashion, we turned the money back," he said.

Examining further, he discovered: "First, the process is veiled in secrecy. Estimates of the amount distributed by individual members for projects in their districts range from \$80 million to as much as \$168 million, with some members receiving as little as \$20,000 and others as much as \$2 million. The division of the total member item allocation is made by the leadership of the dominant party in each house with the objective of maintaining power and distribution favors. These decisions are arrived at on the basis of seniority and, in the case of more junior members, electoral vulnerability."

"For example," Rev. Forrester points out, "a freshman Republican senator from Long Island (Nassau County) who faced a difficult election in the fall received \$1.7 million

with which to purchase good will in his district. By contrast, a veteran Democrat in the Republican-controlled senate received only about \$200,000 last year. A like pattern exists in the Democratic-controlled assembly."

"There are no objective criteria in making grants. There is little scrutiny or accountability for the eventual use of the money distributed. The fund is manipulated by a handful of legislative leaders to accomplish their political purposes," Rev. Forrester charges.

Although some worthwhile groups gain financial benefit through this system, others with equal or higher value or need are shunted aside in the political process which focuses on political gain rather than value. Three officials of one Buffalo-based group which has received some \$250,000 annually have been indicted for misappropriating state funds. Several other member item projects are also currently under investigation.

We have often expressed concern about the "go along to get along" attitude of many state officials. The member item system is one reason—appointment to important committee positions is another—why some elected officials play the go along game, afraid to incur the wrath of their leaders for fear of being shut out of the political payoff grant scheme.

The member item scheme should be immediately ended. State grants to worthwhile groups must be based on strict criteria, with firm guidelines for the use of the funds and a constant audit to ensure they are utilized correctly. It's time to end the use of taxpayer dollars by political leaders to feather their own nests. It's time for our own elected officials to speak out against this misuse of taxpayer dollars, to take steps to eliminate this shameful squandering of our dollars. It's time to put integrity back in state government.

And why not?

SUFFOLK LIFE

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