

willmotts and why-nots

David J. Willmott, Editor

Who is Being Protected?

Recently the Suffolk County Consumer Affairs Bureau released the names of 79 Suffolk retailers charged with violating Local Law 2273.

The SCCA claimed the retailers had made false or misleading representation on pricing for goods they sold. Releasing these names before hearings were held created the public opinion these retailers were guilty of fraudulent practices. That's not the kind of action you would expect from a government bureaucracy whose purported purpose is to bring justice to the marketplace.

The law under which the consumers' bureau issued these summonses is Local Law 2273. It deals with making false or misleading representation on pricing of goods on sale. The law might aptly apply to supermarkets, where there is a large turnover and prices fluctuate, but it hardly applies to furniture stores. The presence of the charges leveled by Consumer Affairs is that stores were advertising false regular prices or showing invalid markdowns on furniture, appliances and rugs.

We have had enough experience in dealing with retailers to know they make mistakes, mistakes in buying. A furniture dealer normally buys a single set of furniture in a particular style. It comes into his store at the price the manufacturer recommends as a retail price. If his judgment is poor on the marketability of the product, the only way to dispose of the goods is to continually mark down the item.

A friend of mine in the furniture business a few years ago had made a mistake. He purchased a dining room set that cost him about \$1,100 and retailed for just under \$2,000. This set sat in his store for more than four years. It had been marked down from \$1,900 to \$1,000 and still did not move.

When he decided to go out of business, he re-inventoried his stock, checking the current wholesale purchase price of the items. The cost to him for the same dining room set under current market conditions was \$2,300. The set had a recommended selling price of more than \$4,000. Under the law, as interpreted by the Consumer Affairs Bureau, if he ad-

vertised this fact, educated the consumer as to the real value of the item, he would be guilty and subjected to a summons.

This is ridiculous and unnecessary interference with commerce here in Suffolk County. We are deeply disturbed by the Consumer Affairs Bureau's factics. Although there were many large retailers included in this sweep, most were small businesses. To hire an attorney to fight the summons, owners incur a legal cost of four to five times the fine.

Many could not afford it, even though they knew they were right, they were innocent; they reluctantly signed cease and desist orders. They paid an unjust fine to the county. This whole situation is wrong. It will come back to bite the consumer.

Undoubtedly, there are fraudulent retail practices in existence. These should be investigated and people prosecuted. Consumers must have a way to accurately determine the true meaning of a regular price, a sale price. The county cannot supply this information. Retailers are in the best position to inform consumers.

We should trust retailers. We have found in our 20 years of dealing with them that those who lie, those who mislead are soon found out. Their reputations are ruined, and they are forced out of business. Most retailers can be trusted to accurately mark their goods. Comparison values shown generally are legitimate.

Retailers should be allowed to show the manufacturer's suggested retail price. Armed with this as a base, consumers have a starting point to determine whether they are getting a bargain. Only when consumers have information can they make intelligent purchases.

The Supreme Court of the United States has gone a long way toward encouraging competition by legalizing advertising for professionals. Its intent is to encourage competition and consumer information. It is ironic the Suffolk County Consumer Affairs Bureau is trying to discourage consumer information and competition.

The Consumer Affairs Bureau has become another department whose need we question. Typical of the

bureaucratic regulations governing commerce, officials assume power they do not have. Often this assumption of power is counter-productive, causing more problems than they solve.

With a new County Executive, we can look forward to a re-organization of the county.

A close, hard look should be directed to this bureau.

Has it grown beyond the Legislature's initial intent? Is its function to protect the consumer, or has it become another bureau that functions to protect the bureaucrats that run it?

And why not?

The Legislature Must Go

We are more convinced than ever, after interviewing candidates for the County Legislature, that this body must go.

During the last ten years of interviewing candidates, we have, with few exceptions, found them poorly qualified to serve your interests.

In 1969, we interviewed the first candidates for the newly-created body. We were appalled at the lack of knowledge these candidates had about the job they were seeking. We are more appalled in 1979.

Few candidates understand the actual working of the Legislature. Most perceive their job as an ombudsman. An ombudsman is someone who acts as a liaison between government and the various agencies. But, county Legislators have nothing to do with towns, villages or the state government.

Yet, most incumbents brag about their ability to perform constituent services on the town and state level, directing people to the right offices. This might be good public service, but it is not what the job is all about.

Okay, what are we paying for? A county legislator is a director of an almost three-quarter billion dollar business, the County of Suffolk. His function is to develop laws, rules and regulations for operating this government, then, make sure it is run efficiently. Legislators must be a counter-balance to the county executive. This function could be performed part-time and at minimum cost.

Total cost of the county Legislature today is almost \$4 million. Individual salaries of the legislators are \$22,000 per year. They are provided with cars, offices, secretaries, aides and expenses. The Legislature has become a duplication of the county executive's office. It increases the tax burden paid by you, the residents of Suffolk County.

The Legislature's purpose initially was to serve the ten towns of Suffolk County. We have had a reversal of roles. The ten towns serve at the will of the county. The Legislature has been an ineffective, co-branch of government to the county executive. It functions primarily to do his bidding, and there is little hope it will ever be much more than a puppet.

Suffolk County was ruled by a Board of Supervisors for more than 200 years. The supervisors met once every two weeks, dispensing with all county business rapidly and in an orderly fashion. The last year we had a Board of Supervisors, the total cost of this operation was under \$100,000.

Almost every supervisor candidate we interviewed, Republican, Democrat and Conservative alike, with any knowledge of the job they were seeking or of the county, said they could handle the dual duties of supervisor and a county board member.

Incumbents supported the current legislature operating from a lack of knowledge and coordination with towns. They missed duplication of efforts that cause needless waste and interfere with the smooth function of government.

We have attempted over the last 18 months to get the Legislature itself to let you vote on which type of government you preferred. Current legislators have argued you are too dumb to make this decision. There is no way they want you presented with the facts to make an informed choice.

Most realize they are not supervisor material, would not get the nod from their party and therefore would risk eliminating their own jobs. Their refusal leaves us, as citizens, with only one route available: initiate the legislation, circulate petitions and force this issue to referendum. This we will do.

If you believe, as we believe that you should have the right to determine the type of government you want representing you, and would be willing to work for this end, please contact this office and secure a petition to circulate in your area.

We will need workers from all ten towns. We must raise a minimum of 25,000 legitimate signatures. This can be done, because it is right, it is good and economical for the County of Suffolk, and ultimately for you. If you are interested in working, please send your name, address and telephone number to: I & R, c-o Suffolk Life Newspaper, P.O. Box 263, Westhampton, N.Y. 11977. We will contact you in return.

And why not?

Readers' Opinion

Dear Mr. Willmott:
Here's to Superintendent Sky!
Who razes trees as they grow high -
Job now secure he'll sit and gloat
And have a place to launch his boat.
Why not take the sturdy oak
And axe it as if it is a joke?
At Pattersquash he now is king,

Because he's done this valiant thing.
Forget the values these trees made,
From drainage to a cooling shade;
For Mr. Corwin now will be
A lifetime Pattersquash member FREE.
Sincerely,
R. Nmesling
Riverhead

USPS 098-300

SUFFOLK LIFE

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L.I. Airport
Mastic, Shirley
Mattituck
Medford

Moriches
Oakdale
Patchogue
Port Jefferson
Riverhead
Rocky Point
Ronkonkoma

Sayville
Seiden
Shoreham, Wading River
Southampton, Hampton Bays
Southold, Greenport
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Figure This One Out

Government budgets are drafted a year ahead of time. The 1979-80 budget for the state government was drawn up in 1978 and passed in the spring of 1979.

No one, even the world's greatest pessimist, foresaw in 1978 that the cost of gasoline and home heating oils would double. The 100 percent increase in the price of these necessities has meant the state receives a like increase in sales taxes on these items. That increase to the state is true for all other items whose costs have increased, reflecting the costs of these items and the final selling prices.

These monies are accruing to state and county governments right now. Where state and county governments planned on three cents on every gallon coming into their coffers for this budget year, they are receiving six cents.

Last week, the state Legislature met in an emergency session to enact legislation allowing the state and county to reduce the sales taxes on heating oil: not now, but a year from now, Sept. 1, 1980. Coincidentally, that's two months before these con artists run for re-election. That's 16 months after prices have doubled, and we have paid the 100 percent increase through sales taxes.

Last week I picked up the paper and Gov. Hugh Carey's chief economist was warning the governor a reduction in these sales taxes would raise havoc with state finances.

I thought, hold it a second! How could these reductions raise havoc if the money hadn't been anticipated in the first place? The economist commended that to compensate, the gasoline tax be raised from six to eight cents per gallon. This is ludicrous and preposterous. If we believe it, we are all damn fools.

The state and county governments have reaped millions of dollars in unanticipated revenues from sales taxes due to the doubling of prices. Monies that were not counted on, not planned for, then, by God, should not have been spent like pennies from heaven.

If Carey and the Legislature have taken these windfall taxes and squandered them, they better find ways of recovering them because we, as citizens, demand a reduction in our sales taxes on all petroleum products. Petroleum products are necessities, not luxuries. We do not have the option of doing without them.

We must heat our homes. To heat our homes we must pay the price for gasoline, oil, electricity or coal. We should not have to pay sales taxes on these items. This is a necessity of life, as much as food.

To get to work to earn a living so we can pay taxes, we must drive. To drive, we need gasoline. We may have to pay the inflated prices, we have no choice. But we don't have to pay sales taxes imposed by the politicians we have elected to office.

Either these taxes come off in full by the deadline they have set, by next September, or our assemblymen and senators can answer for it at the polls in November. They are John Behan, assemblyman, 1st District; George Hochbrueckner, assemblyman, 2nd District; Bill Bianchi, assemblyman, 3rd District; Paul Harenberg, assemblyman, 5th District; Sen. Ken LaValle, and Sen. Caesar Trunzo.

We won't get a crack at Carey for another two years, but let him try to operate the assembly without a Democratic majority. Carey and crowd may think we are a bunch of idiots, whose sole purpose is to pay taxes for them to spend. We're not.

Our own personal budgets are in perilous condition because we have been subjected to unprecedented increases in the cost of fuel. Our government was unable to stop these costs because of their ineptness or because it benefits directly from our suffering.

This benefit, the increase in sales taxes, must be eliminated so the incentive for government to benefit from our grief can be eliminated. If officials don't get this message, let them get the message of the voters' wrath a year from now. And why not?

where they can. The public is denied the right to cut along the highways, but it appears the state not only condones employees acting as free agents, but pays wages, plus letting them use equipment. Our taxes are used to aid their little side business.

The denials and the callous attitude by the management of the State Transportation Department is the same as encouraging state employees to rip us off. This whole situation stinks. We own these lands as citizens, so why shouldn't we, as citizens, be allowed to harvest this wood?

Why should it be the private domain of state employees? Why should they

be allowed to collect salaries for cutting wood that they ultimately will use or sell?

Why should equipment paid for through our taxes be used?

This whole situation isn't going to make or break the tax structure of the state of New York, but it is indicative of the many little things that make us pay the highest taxes in the nation, while receiving minimal benefits.

If the state is going to use our lands, our trucks and our employees, then at least let them make the wood available to the taxpayers also.

And why not?

Readers' Opinion

"It is my understanding"

Dear Mr. Willmott:

In your story about the "Pierson Issue" in the Nov. 7 issue, your reporter states that "it appears that if the bond issue fails, the next move would be to close the school and bus the community's students seven miles to neighboring East Hampton High School, on a tuition basis."

I don't know where your reporter got this information but if it came from Dr. Annacone, whose name appears in the article, either Dr. Annacone is badly misinformed (which I doubt) or it is a deliberate attempt to scare the voters of the Sag Harbor School District into voting for the \$4.2 million bond issue. It is my understanding of what would happen if the bond issue is defeated, is that the school board with their architect would go back to the drawing board and attempt to come up with a less costly renovation plan that would be more acceptable to the tax-

payers of the district. Also a plan that would not require a complete change to an educational concept that, it appears, has failed so miserably elsewhere.

Incidentally, to keep the parents of the district informed, their children cannot be bused to East Hampton without another referendum being submitted to the voters for their approval. Further, the tuition for sending the students to East Hampton, when and if such eventuality should ever occur, would be paid by the school district. And why not?

Sincerely,
Edd Rose
Noyac

Editor's Note: The reader is correct that one option open to the board would be re-drafting plans. And, wouldn't the district payments to East Hampton be borne by the taxpayers?

"Getting the Italians?"

Dear Mr. Willmott:

Your article "Getting the Italians" in the 8-29-79 issue was recently brought to my attention. Not getting into the politics, pitting one candidate against another, I take objection to part of your statement when you say, "there is no Italian-American Club."

For your information, there are many Italian-American clubs throughout our great country. I am extremely proud to be a member of the "Brookhaven Italian-American Service Club, Inc.", a club that has been active for over twenty years in the greater Patchogue area, providing services and financing to the needy.

For the past seven years, our club has sponsored the "Louis A. Fuoco, Sr. Memorial Golf Tournament" for the benefit of Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck. I know you are familiar with

Camp Pa-Qua-Tuck because I know your sentimental feeling for this wonderful facility.

If what you say is not what you meant, then I would suggest you clarify exactly what you meant. I am certain I am speaking for the many members of Italian-American clubs throughout our county.

Very truly yours,
L. "Bud" Fuoco

Ed. Note: Bud: We both know there are many Italian-American organizations. They have various names as your's does, which includes in its name the geography served and the purpose of the club. But you are an old time politician. You know exactly the point of the editorial.

Another Fringe Benefit?

Recently traveling on Sunrise Highway by Marker 24, Hampton Bays, we spotted two N.Y. State Highway vehicles parked near a stand of good, hard wood. Deep in the woods we saw four men cutting.

By the time we were able to turn around and get back, the four individuals were standing alongside of a dump truck loaded with approximately a cord of white oak cut into eight-foot lengths. Subsequent examination indicated a number of trees had been cut; stumps were fresh with sap.

State Department of Tran-

sportation officials vehemently denied it was their trucks or their men involved. When informed we had pictures and truck numbers, they maintained the men were only clearing branches and fallen trees.

Ironically, pictured behind the truck published on Suffolk Life's front page last week is a broken tree that first caught our attention about two hours before. Although this tree is the closest to the truck, it had not been cut.

Firewood has reached \$150 per cord, and many men are supplementing their incomes, cutting

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Let Them Eat Oil

This Thanksgiving throughout America we are paying far more for everything we eat, everything we consume. This condition exists despite the fact our farms are producing at record levels.

The culprit is oil, the greed of the OPEC nations and the oil companies. This Thanksgiving, we are being humiliated worldwide. Iran, one of the major producers of oil, is holding captive our American embassy and the people who staff it. We are literally at war, even though troops have not been moved onto the battlefield. Carter, to his credit, has suspended Iranian oil purchases and is taking a hard line.

A recent item in the Wall Street Journal forecasts a worldwide reduction in grains, cereals and rices of as much as six percent in the coming year. This economic fact should put us in an enviable leading position. Foodstuffs are the staff of life, much more important than oil.

The President should limit the order of limitation on exporting of foodstuffs produced here in America to countries friendly to us. He should cut off supplies to OPEC nations and

countries supporting them.

Let's sell these vital food products on a quota basis to those hostile countries at hugely inflated prices, and their governments can face the pressure from hungry mobs. Some will say it is inhuman to bargain with food. Is this not, though, what we have been doing since the evolution of mankind?

Productive farmers and productive farmlands have always controlled the world economy. Those able to produce are able to enjoy the blessings of this production. Only in America do we look at this national asset through rose-colored glasses.

The lenses of these glasses have lost their color, as we have had our backs pressed against the wall. It's time for Americans to stand up and act macho. We have the one thing the world needs - food. Let's bargain with it as efficiently as the Middle East oil producing countries have done with petroleum.

America should produce for Americans first. Let the rest of the world pay, as we have paid for petroleum.

And why not?

We're Doing Something About Taxes

It's painfully obvious to anyone only watching this year's political races that our officials themselves won't willingly curtail spending. We are going to have to do it.

Thankfully, in Suffolk County we have the mechanism to cap this government's budget. The mechanism is Initiative & Referendum, the same mechanism used by California voters to pass their now famous Proposition 13 that slashed taxes. A subsequent proposition adopted in November further restricted that government's abilities to wring taxes and fees out of their citizens.

Passage of a Suffolk County

Proposition 13 will require monumental effort by citizens from all 10 towns. We currently are having an attorney draw up legal papers for the Initiative and Referendum procedure.

Initially, only 250 signatures are needed from throughout the county. The county attorney then has 30 days to prepare the measure for the legislature. If the legislature fails to act within 60 days, which we expect, a committee must be formed to gather an estimated 25,000 signatures representing at least 5 percent of the number of voters in the last gubernatorial election.

If this can be accomplished, you

will have a proposition on the ballot next November. If passed, it will cap the county budget at the 1975 level, allowing only for increases caused by inflation. This will effectively tie the hands of the politicians. It will stop them from creating any new, costly, spending programs to be funded through new taxes.

A budget capped at the 1975 level could mean the elimination of all county real estate taxes or a reduction in real estate and sales taxes. Here is our opportunity to stop talking

about taxes and do something meaningful about them. If California voters can do it, so can those in Suffolk.

If you are interested in becoming part of the tax revolt movement, and would be interested in coordinating an area or going out with petitions, send your name, address and phone number to Suffolk Tax Revolt, P.O. Box 262, Westhampton, N.Y. 11977 and we will contact you and tell you what you can do. And why not?

C.G. Sinking Ponquogue?

The U.S. Coast Guard's function is to aid navigation, patrol the waterways and protect the coastline during war, right? Not quite!

Coast Guard officials have added road and bridge designing and saving the environment to their duties. They have jumped four square into the controversy over rebuilding the Ponquogue Bridge, the only easterly access to Dune Road.

Built in 1928, it is now falling apart. Heavy trucks are banned from using this span. The county Department of Public Works recognized the need for a new bridge several years ago. Plans were drawn to meet current and future needs, and were economical. The estimated cost was under \$2 million.

The plan called for a straight line bridge from Lighthouse Road to Dune Road, eliminating a dangerous curve leading to the present bridge. That bridge would be converted into a fishing pier, enlarging and enhancing our recreational facilities.

The Coast Guard should only be concerned with the height of the bridge over navigable waters. But, officials have come up with their own plan, which must be followed or approval will be withheld. The estimated cost of that plan currently is \$12 million. The Coast Guard claims the county proposal would require filling three acres of tidal wetlands.

Why should the Coast Guard be concerned about the environment? Isn't that the concern of the Army Corps of Engineers and the D.E.C. of the county and the state?

Coast Guard refusal to bend already has doubled the projected

cost for the bridge. The day is closer when the bridge will have to be closed to all traffic. If and when this happens, we wonder about folks in the Village of Quogue. How will they feel about having all the traffic that currently passes over the Ponquogue Bridge going through their community?

Quogue is a high-income, exclusive community that would just as soon consider itself removed from Long Island.

Moreover, if this bridge is closed, what about the health and safety of the residents? What happens when a fire breaks out and it takes firefighters 20 minutes longer to get to the scene?

The Coast Guard does not belong in the middle of this controversy. Its only concern is that navigable waterways affected by this bridge be kept open. Also, the bridge shouldn't pose safety hazards or restrict boaters. Rep. William Carney should have been working on this for the last two years.

To the best of our knowledge, he has remained ignorant, choosing not to become involved. Neither has Senators Jacob Javits nor Patrick Moynihan.

The Coast Guard's interference in this local community Suffolk County project is typical of what is wrong with our government and the bureaucracy. It hinders programs and hurts the people who pay for its survival.

We urge you to write to Carney, Javits and Moynihan, requesting they intervene. And why not?

Readers' Opinion

"Who helps us?"

Dear Mr. Willmott:

I was very pleased to read the article, "Middle Class Concern" in your Suffolk Life Newspaper. My husband has a very good paying job in the mid-\$20,000 bracket and we are a family of six and can't seem to have very much left each week from his paycheck. Sometimes you can't figure it out, but your article proves just where your money does go when you get finished paying your mortgage and all those outrageously high utility bills.

No wonder there is so little left for any sort of small entertainment.

Everyone is always feeling so bad for the low-income groups. They make out much better than the middle class. Who helps us? No one. It's really quite discouraging, and I hope something can be done about it in a hurry.

Thank you,
Arleen Quiry
Holbrook

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Why Help Chrysler?

When you hear Chrysler, a giant corporation, is in trouble, your reaction probably is, "so what. It won't affect me."

But, it will. There will be few of us who won't be affected. Chrysler is very much involved right here in Suffolk Life-land. There are not only a dozen or more automotive agencies, but marine divisions and a host of other businesses serving and supporting their operation.

Chrysler's demise could well affect more than 2,000 jobs here in Suffolk County, 2,000 jobs we can ill-afford to lose. Chrysler is not asking the federal government for a handout, but for a guarantee of loans this giant corporation needs to exist. Officials are asking for adjustments on taxes, not avoidance. They want roll-overs of losing years to be counted against future ones of profit. They are asking for equal and fair treatment from the federal government.

The federal government has helped bail out American Motors on numerous occasions. It so happens American Motors' headquarters are in the district of Sen. William Proxmire, a power to be reckoned with on the Ways and Means Committee. Proxmire has opposed aid to Chrysler, yet voted to help Chrysler's competition when it was in financial

trouble.

The U.S. government bailed out McDonald Douglas just a few short years ago. They saved thousands of jobs and kept intact a manufacturing operation which helps support the entire American economy and must be operational in time of war. Chrysler, likewise, is a corporation we can't do without, particularly now as we face the grave possibility of war again.

Many of Chrysler's problems have been created by the bureaucrats in Washington. The federal government has interfered with the profitable operation of Chrysler, from employment of personnel through manufacturing and marketing of products.

Chrysler cannot be allowed to go under. The devastating effects will be felt from California to New York. Looking closer at home, the fragile economy of Suffolk could not stand the loss of employment.

Suffolk Life supports the federal government's guarantee of loans for Chrysler and the adjustment in taxes. This will allow Chrysler to regain a profitable position, pulling itself up by the bootstraps. If this is welfare or a handout, we're for it.

And why not?

Meet or Quit!

A coalition of Long Island businessmen on Nov. 14 requested a meeting with the commissioner of the Department of Consumers Affairs.

The purpose of this meeting was to clarify Commissioner Anthony Apollaro's interpretation of Local Law No. 22, under which he has bombarded county retailers with alleged violations. The retailers acted in good faith in asking for this meeting. Apollaro has refused.

This refusal can only be construed as an arrogant, bureaucratic lack of responsiveness or admission that his interpretation of the law is indefensible. Apollaro's department, acting on its own interpretation of the law, issued summonses to almost 100 retailers, ranging from Mom and Pop

operations to retail giants. These retailers felt they were operating within the guidelines of the Robertson-Patton Act, which spells out fair trade practices for advertising and marketing merchandise.

The retailers feel the Consumers Affairs' action borders on entrapment. They are unified in their contention that no guidelines have been issued by the county. They seek a clarification of the law, specific guidelines they could live with governing the operation of their businesses. This is reasonable.

The meeting they seek with Apollaro could accomplish this if both sides held open and frank discussions based on good faith. It appears to Suffolk Life the county Consumer

Affairs Department has overstepped its boundaries, and officials want to avoid an inevitable confrontation, leaving retailers and consumers up in the air.

If Apollaro continues his refusal to

meet with the Coalition of Long Island Businessmen, he should be forced to resign and turn over the reins to someone with the courage of his convictions.

And why not?

Who's Opposed To Local Cops?

Almost a decade ago, the Suffolk County Police Department was created. It was argued a unified county police force could offer more sophisticated crime prevention services at a more reasonable cost than individual towns.

Today, Suffolk County police are the highest paid in the nation, and police protection is not what many local villages and communities desire. Some villages and local sections of the county have decided to supplement county police services through constables. These constables are charged with administration of local laws, and in general, upholding law and order.

Suffolk County police are opposing the creation of constables. They claim they infringe upon police powers and provide a lesser quality of service than county police.

What is really going on is a power play between unions representing Suffolk County police and municipalities who want more police services, and the taxpayers. The cost of funding constables is far less than hiring additional county police. However, police unions want constables to be union men.

County officials claim they can't afford these additional costs. Municipal officials say if the county doesn't, they will. The whole matter, unfortunately, is headed for court, as County Attorney Howard Pachman is suing the Village of Port Jefferson for

using constables. Patchogue Village also has moved in the same direction.

Village officials contend that under state law, they can create such forces. Pachman argues the Suffolk County Charter allows for only county police. However, if a municipality and its residents feel they are under-protected and want to use their own tax dollars to provide this protection, we can see no reason why they should be stopped.

These forces don't replace, but merely supplement those already in existence. They do not diminish or reduce the power or scope of Suffolk County police operations. There is already strong sentiment in several communities that county police as presently structured are not doing their job. The cost of funding has grown out of proportion.

We suspect this is the real reason Suffolk County police are reluctant to accept aid being offered. If constables can reduce crime and vandalism, provide better service, not only villages but towns might reconsider the need for county police. The union does not want to lose its power.

Regardless of the political implications, if municipalities and specialized areas throughout Suffolk want to supplement current police protection and are willing to pay for it, they should be allowed to do so.

And why not?

Thanksgiving Without Football?

The boob tube has made commercial football a traditional part of many Thanksgiving celebrations.

Prior to the boob tube, Thanksgiving traditionally marked the end of the high school football season. Thanksgiving morning across Long Island was, and still is in some cases, the scene of old-time rivals playing the traditional Thanksgiving game.

One of the oldest rivalries in New York State is the Southampton-Riverhead contest. Going back a couple of decades, we well remember the fevered pitch of the student body in anticipation of this great day on the field.

Talk and speculation filled the week prior to the contest. Huge pep rallies were held the night before the game, complete with Aunt Tillie's outhouse as the center of the bonfire and the opposing school's symbol burned in effigy.

At the game, stands were packed the spirits ran high. The victors paraded through the streets of both towns, horns honking, flags waving and cheerleaders cheering. This year, Southampton and Riverhead renewed this rivalry at the start of the season. The game was played after school, under overcast skies. At the start of

the game, there was less than a dozen fans from either school in the stands. The band played without enthusiasm, the cheerleaders went through the motions, but the spirit was missing. As the game wore on, the stands filled, but the spectators seemed interested in everything but what was occurring on the field.

It was a sad day, not only because Riverhead, who I rooted for, had lost, but because the spirit, the competitiveness and the excitement were gone.

The traditional spirit of this competition should be brought back and encouraged. The Riverhead-Southampton annual contest should be played on Thanksgiving morning. Re-creating this spirited rivalry on a day when all could get to the game would go a long way toward rebuilding enthusiasm in both schools. To accomplish this, both school boards would have to agree, as well as the athletes and athletic departments.

From what we have learned, the players are enthusiastic and the school boards need encouragement from the community. Why not go to your next school board meeting or send a letter of encouragement?

And why not?

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