

Justice By Checkbook

A Nuclear Regulatory Commission panel announced last week its approval of a low power application by the Long Island Lighting Company to load fuel into and test the controversial Shoreham nuclear power plant. In doing so, this panel, part and parcel of the federal bureaucracy which created it, the NRC, has ignored the primary issue they are responsible to deal with—the safety of the public—in favor of the financial status of the utility which seeks to operate the plant.

Before a plant is permitted to go on line with full power, all safety issues, including an approved emergency evacuation plan, must first be resolved. That same requirement once held true as far as low power operation was concerned as well, but Congress approved a low power bill which permits testing of a plant under low power without an evacuation plan in place. The fallacy of that law is the fact that once the fuel is activated, the cost of decommissioning a plant begins. If safety issues cannot be resolved—in the case of Shoreham a suitable evacuation plan to safeguard the safety of the public—activation of the fuel is a wasteful expenditure, a needless expense that should not be committed until and unless all safety issues are resolved.

What happens, unfortunately, is that the mere specter of millions of dollars of decommissioning costs causes the NRC to bend the rules of safety to put the plant on line.

In the case of Shoreham, approval by the full commission for low power operation—expected to come shortly after Election Day—would be the first time such approval has been given for a plant that does not have fully operative and approved emergency diesel generators to provide on-site power in the event of a mishap. Shoreham's diesels, you will remember, have suffered a host of cracks during test runs. New diesels are at Shoreham, but are not in place. An off-site power source, one that has already suffered a

failure but has been accepted by the NRC, is designed to be an alternate power source. In establishing precedent by approving low power for Shoreham, the NRC will be thumbing its nose at the concerns and the safety of the public.

Needless to say, we were shocked—but not totally surprised—at the NRC's callous disregard for the public's safety in the matter of Shoreham, and are thoroughly disgusted and frustrated by this action. The people deserve better.

Suffolk Life has been passionately consumed with the Shoreham issue for the past several years. We have devoted a major portion of the time of our news and editorial staffs on this one single issue, and countless columns of space on the subject. Unquestionably, we spent far too much time on this issue. Our motivation was simply this: no matter how the Shoreham controversy ended, with Shoreham abandoned or on line, we were going to tell the public all there was to tell about the story. In the end, however it was resolved, we felt it very important that the public knew the full story as much as it could be told so there could be no cry: "Why didn't someone tell us." We tried.

We have felt all along, and still do, that Shoreham is not a single issue as it covers the gamut of safety, health and quality of life of our readers, and, of equal importance, of the economics of the people and business for a long time to come.

We only wish we had been able to arouse more people and more businesses to take an active part in the Shoreham issue. Nothing, including politics and taxes, will have the kind of impact Shoreham will have on our lives for decades to come.

As publisher of this paper I may have erred in investing the time, and the money, that I did on Shoreham. But let it be said that if I erred, I did so on the side of safety and the people, rather than the

benefit of LILCO and my own pocketbook.

That motivation, to do what was in the best interest of the public in terms of safety and economics, was the primary motivation of the staff of this publication. We are proud of our coverage on this issue, which was far more in detail than could be found in any other publication. We are proud of our news staff for the dedication they have given to this vital issue. We suffer with them the frustration they feel that the power of big business, the arrogance of bureaucracy, the callous disregard by public officials for the valid concerns of the public have won out over the welfare of the people.

Ironically, this editorial is being written just prior to Election Day, the day we as Americans choose our leaders and affirm our belief in our system of government. When I go to the polls this Tuesday, I know I will feel somewhat hypocritical for I will be voting for candidates knowing that the government that they will be involved in has become bigger than they, insensitive to change. The government is out of control of our elected representatives. Bureaucracies, such as the NRC, are in control of our destinies and are operating out of the realm of right and reason and, in fact, the law itself.

The only thing these agencies are sensitive to is the checkbook, which reaffirms the advice I was given many years ago by a prominent New York City constitutional lawyer: "Son, don't kid yourself. Right or wrong has nothing to do with justice. Our system of government, law, and justice is determined by the checkbook. The one with the most money to spend will be the victor in litigation. Right or wrong does not enter into the picture."

The Long Island Lighting Company built the Shoreham nuclear power plant. It didn't make any difference whether it had been built correctly or incorrectly. Whether it will jeopardize our

health, our lives, and the investment we have made on Long Island. The Long Island Lighting Company had more money—actually, the use of your money and mine—and the ability to raise more money than we as a people and our local government could raise collectively to fight this monopoly. In the end, Shoreham has become a symbol of concern for the preservation of the nuclear industry rather than an issue of concern about people and their welfare. If Shoreham can be stopped, so can other plants and the nuclear industry is doomed, became the battle cry of those with the NRC, who were looking to protect their bureaucracy, and others in high places, for similar reasons.

Forget the problems particular to Shoreham itself. Let's not talk Shoreham specific, let's talk nuclear power in general and the future of the nuclear industry. Those things are more important in the minds of those who have succeeded in pushing Shoreham down our throats. The people? Forget the people! Think of the dollars!

The NRC, which has the power to license Shoreham, paid more attention to the money of LILCO than to the lives and safety of Long Island residents. With the issuance of a low power license a virtual certainty, the NRC has committed us to an additional cost that has been estimated to be at least equal to the construction cost of Shoreham for future dismantling and decommission. The total cost ratepayers will then have to absorb will be at least \$8 billion when those costs are factored in, if not higher. And the rates will soar beyond control.

Barring an unforeseen miracle, an act of God, Shoreham will go on line and our lives and our property will be in danger for the next two generations . . . or until an accident writes the tragic end of the saga of Shoreham. God help us.

And why not?

Dead Wrong

The Southampton Town Board last week voted to appeal a recent court decision that directed the board to revise its method of selecting those who may lease spaces at the new commercial fishing dock near the Shinnecock Inlet. In presenting that ruling State Supreme Court Judge James A. Gowan said the way the town selected those who would get dock leases denied others "basic fairness." The judge is absolutely correct! The town was wrong in the way it originally picked the fishermen who could lease these spaces, and town officials are compounding this wrong by spending taxpayers' funds to appeal his decision.

The new facility was built with the use of both federal and county funds, and is owned by the County of Suffolk. Southampton Town will operate the facility under a lease arrangement with the county. That lease stipulates there should be no discrimination in the selection of those who could utilize the dock spaces. But discrimination is

exactly what happened, not only against other county commercial fishermen who never even got a chance to be considered, but also against commercial fishermen from the town who did not happen to be in favor with the powers that be.

Two of those town fishermen, James Flaherty and Sam Hettrick, were successful in the suit brought against the town. Lacking the town's resources—the taxpayer's pockets—for legal expenses, the two filed papers and stated their case themselves.

Although it had been initially indicated that a "lottery" would be held to designate dock spaces at the facility, it didn't work out that way. Supervisor Martin Lang has admitted the primary consideration was based on the support of the fishermen who were active in obtaining county support for the construction of the dock. The selection process, based on this criteria, was attacked by many who claimed Lang used the dock

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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 nom de plume.

NEWS AND PHOTOGRAPHS - Readers are welcome to submit ideas of interest and photographs for consideration of publication.

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Willmotts and Why-Nots

David J. Willmott, Editor

Dead Wrong . . .

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leases to reward friends for political support.

Some town officials indicated at that time they were unaware that Lang would make the selection by choice rather than lottery. They said they had been told—and, indeed, the original list of names indicated the selection would be done by lottery—that a lottery would be held.

According to Judge Gowan, the assignments should be made "on the basis of the draw and not on the whim of the drawer." And we agree. The new facility was built not with the private funds of town board members, but with federal and county dollars which came from the taxpayers. The use of the facility constructed with those taxpayers' dollars should not be used by any individual or group of politicians for their own little empire. Although operated by the Town of Southampton, that dock is public property, not the private

possession of Marty Lang or town board members.

Usually appeals are filed based on valid disagreement with legal interpretations in such matters. But there's nothing legal about the need for fairness. As Judge Gowan noted, the town's action in assigning the leases lacked basic fairness, pure and simple. A lottery, held after ample notification to all commercial fishermen, is the only fair way to deal with this matter. If the town wishes to use dock spaces to reward friends, the officials should use their own funds, not taxpayers' dollars.

In the meantime, we would suggest the town board immediately stop the additional expenditure of taxpayers' dollars for the appeal process, schedule a lottery and proceed with the fairness that has been so sorely lacking. Let's stop playing games with public funds to satisfy personal motives.

And why not?



PROMOTED—Riverhead Savings Bank President Christy P. Kalivas recently announced the appointment of Patricia L. Preu of Southampton to assistant loan officer. She will be headquartered at the bank's main office in Riverhead, with responsibilities in the areas of commercial lending, credit analysis, loan monitoring and new business development. Born and raised in Roslyn, Preu attended Roslyn High School and graduated from the University of Hartford with a bachelor of arts degree in Sociology. She has been in the banking industry for 11 years. (H-205)

"To obtain an absentee ballot"

To the Editor:

Much has been said lately via the news media about politicians being concerned about problems preventing physically handicapped people from voting.

No one to date, to my knowledge, has presented information regarding how and from where to obtain an "absentee ballot." It seems to be a well-kept secret.

My wife, a registered voter, Election District 32, Town of Southampton, has a physi-

cal handicap, is in a wheelchair, and can no longer stand in a booth at the polls. Perhaps such problems can be partially solved for next year by having paper ballot fill-ins at the polls. In the meantime what are the "how and where to" procedures for her to obtain an absentee ballot for this 1984 November election?

And why not!
Philip E. Johnson
Hampton Bays

"Was the room smoke-filled?"

To the Editor:

I applaud State Supreme Court Judge James A. Gowan on his recent decision regarding the method of selection of recipients of slips at the just completed town fishing pier at Shinnecock Inlet in Hampton Bays.

As an interested taxpayer and a proponent for such a facility to improve and develop the commercial fishing industry in this area, I have tried to keep abreast of the subject matter since its inception.

Every news article I've read regarding the progress of this venture indicated that the slips would be awarded by a lottery system. If this was not the intent of the Town of Southampton, particularly its Supervisor, why was this not brought to the attention of the public? To have a back-room meeting with his deputy supervisor and Sea Grant Official John Scotti (with all due respect to those gentlemen) for the purpose of hand-picking the dock recipients appears to me to be disgusting political discrimination.

Was the room smoke-filled?

As for Mr. Lang's claim that the assignments were based on the involvement of each fisherman in the project, I would respond that this is pure bull. What kind of involvement would qualify a person for this preferential treatment? Shaking Mr. Lang's hand?

One thing that perplexes me more than anything else is the proper use of public funds. Tax money is being used for this project and as such, it would appear to me that it is the responsibility of an honest public official to see that the end product of these funds is used in such a way that it would not be subject to adverse criticism by the people providing the funds, namely the taxpayers.

Again, I applaud Judge Gowan's decision and find it refreshing to find there are people who also consider the moral responsibilities of public figures to be just as important as the legal ones.

An Interested Taxpayer

"The myth of growing old in America"

To the Editor:

I wish to respond to the opinion offered in a letter to Newsday (Oct. 10, 1984) by Mr. Gerald M. Boyle regarding his uncomfortable feeling towards President Ronald Reagan's age.

Being frail, incapacitated or witless is not symptomatic of advanced age. It is unfortunate that today, 1984, with so much advancement made to dispel the stereotypical views of our population towards ethnic groups, religious groups, handicapped people, etc., that so little has been accomplished to eradicate the myth of growing old in America.

It is true that many people at the age of 70 have lost some of their former physical and mental sharpness; some people lose these abilities at 50. But the loss of these abilities and growing older are not synonymous. As a young man of 33 with all my abilities intact I should be a candidate of cynicism for the abilities of the older American. If not for the living example of my father, I might have been cynical.

At the age of 73 years young, my father, Frederick C. Edel, is an attorney with an active law practice on Henry Street in Hempstead, Long Island. He is as sharp of wit, intensive, studious and people orientated as a man of half his years. His personal law library is constantly being updated with additions, the most recent copies of legal publications received are devoured by this man and his ability to decipher the latest

legal court battles are outstanding. The sparkle of life is still bright in his eyes, eyes that have remained optimistic. His hand grip and his wit match, strong and firm. Similar to President Reagan, my father does not dye his full head of dark, wavy hair.

Yes, I understand that some people can become physically and mentally weaker as time evolves, but that is not the rule. My father, at least two dozen of his friends and associates, many of our senators, congressmen, entertainers, educators and other professional and non-professional Americans who have passed the age of 70 have demonstrated to me that being old and chronological age are two different events.

Our President, Ronald Reagan, has demonstrated that the elder population of our country can lead a functional existence and they are capable of positive contributions to our continued peace, security and economic growth for the USA.

Yours,
Frederick T. Edel
Aquebogue

P.S. You might footnote this letter indicating that as an instructor at Suffolk County Community College many of my students are people over 65. It has been my experience that the older student is more interested in learning, and they are easier to teach and communicate with.

Readers' Opinion

"We share your concern"

Dear Dave:

Look at the enclosed letter from the state PSC. They claim that they gave LILCO its increase to avoid bankruptcy for the utility. What about my potential bankruptcy? Do you think that LILCO or the banks that are now crying for LILCO would care about me (or any other ratepayer)?

This company is run by incompetents. They refused power from the State Power Authority that could have reduced our bills, they got us into this Shoreham mess in an attempt to increase their profits; and if they have their way they will sink deeper along with the ratepayers.

The solutions are clear:

- 1) Fire the PSC commissioners.
- 2) Let LILCO go bankrupt (they and their banker friends deserve it).
- 3) Abandon Shoreham. There is enough capacity on the Island to last through the next decade, and Shoreham power is not cheap.
- 4) Try to buy more power from the state and Quebec. Long Islanders helped pay for the State Power Authority, and Hydro Quebec has an ever growing surplus that they are eager to sell.
- 5) Support Suffolk and (maybe Nassau) moves to pick up the LILCO operation. Socialism doesn't work very well because of the lack of competition, but that's what you have right now with the LILCO monopoly, and the PSC lack of concern for ratepayers make it worse.
- 6) Forget the tax issue. LILCO doesn't pay taxes, I do. It all comes out of the ratepayer's pocket—the taxes, the investment costs, interest on the costs, the dividends to stockholders etc. None of the ratepayers is getting a free ride, the trick is not to get taken.
- 7) Support politicians who are friendly to the ratepayers—Cuomo and Hochbrueck-

ner. Can LILCO's political friends—Carney, D'Amato and the PSC staff.

P.S. If you print this, don't use my name, and pardon the spelling and typo's.

P.P.S. With some research, mostly from the PSC's own audit, The LILCO fiasco or how Long Island almost went to the poorhouse could be an interesting book.

(The following is the State of New York Department of Public Service's response to the above reader's letter:)

Chairman Gioia has asked me to respond to your letter of September 9, 1984 concerning the rate increase that was granted to the Long Island Lighting Company.

We share your concern for the impact of rate increases on the consumer. The Commission is aware of the effect of higher utility costs which are added to all the other increases our citizens face. We are particularly concerned with the impact on those people who are on fixed incomes.

The Commission has an obligation to consider a rate request and does not after long and extensive public hearings and critical examination. Unlike many other businesses, utilities must justify increased rates.

Please be assured that the Commission reached its decision most reluctantly. They found that the alternative to a rate relief for LILCO would be bankruptcy for the utility. This situation could have caused even worse consequences for the Long Island ratepayers since we do not have the authority to direct the county or any other authority to assume responsibility for providing service. The Commission therefore, believes that it is vital that such failure be avoided.

Sincerely,
Marie Thompson
Consumer Services Division

Happy Thanksgiving

As the pilgrims did when they came to this country, we follow the tradition of putting aside a day to reflect upon our bounties and to give thanks. And we all should.

God has been generous to America. We have some of the finest natural resources in the world. A melting pot of people who have blended their strengths, their desires to produce a sound economic base that all can benefit from.

Our system of government, although we like to complain about it, affords each of us freedom, justice and opportunities not en-

joyed by most of the rest of the world.

We are given an opportunity to grow, to develop and to succeed in a chosen field, and go in that field as far as our ambitions and abilities allow.

This Thursday as we gather with families and friends to enjoy our festive meal, let us all start with joining hands and offering our own prayer in thanks and acknowledgement for our bountiful blessings and opportunities.

We hope all have a happy Thanksgiving.

Safety On The Run

The Long Island Lighting Company has embarked on a new ploy to put the Shoreham nuclear power plant on line, this time dangling dollars in front of bus drivers to get them to sign up for evacuation duty in the event of a mishap at that facility.

Suffolk Life has received a great number of calls from bus drivers concerned about this tactic because, they fear, many of the drivers will sign to get the bucks, and then not respond if an accident occurs. If that indeed is the case, these bus drivers are playing serious games with the safety of the students within the evacuation zone.

One concerned caller noted: "The attitude amongst the drivers in the area where I work is 'Take the money and run... who's going to force us to drive if there is an accident?' That's tragic. While no one may be able to force someone to participate during an emergency at the plant, what will happen to the children those drivers who don't participate are responsible for in an evacuation procedure? Will they be left stranded at their schools? Will they be subject to increased danger to their health because their bus driver didn't show up? And

worse yet, never really intended to do so?"

LILCO needs names on a list in order to convince the NRC that its proposed evacuation plan is workable. If it doesn't get the names, it doesn't have a workable plan. But if it does get the names, and the NRC continues its parade toward putting Shoreham on line by approving the LILCO plan—which would have LILCO employees who are on a \$500 "retainer" participate directing traffic in the event of an accident at Shoreham—the plan may be nothing but a false assurance perpetrated by the signatures of people whose only concern is the \$250 yearly retainer being offered by LILCO.

The bus drivers who are signing the agreements to participate, in return for the \$250 yearly retainer and the \$9 per hour for the 14 hours of training, must be honest about their intent. Will they put their families first? Or live up to the obligation they have made to help in the evacuation of people from the threatened areas surrounding the plant.

If the family comes first, say so now. Don't "take the money and run" because the lives of the children are too important to be

put into jeopardy for the sake of the pieces of silver the \$250 represents.

Be honest—one way or the other—but please, don't play

games with the lives of the children your signature now says you will help to protect later.

Any why not?

Joy of Christmas

A couple of years back, a group of us who were enjoying a holiday together were discussing how fortunate we were. The discussion led to a story told by the late Jess Marchese.

He told us of winning a turkey in a raffle. He was going to Maine for the holidays. When he arrived he found that the family already had a bird and the one he had brought with him was extra. He called the local church and asked if they knew of a deserving family who would not have a turkey for Christmas. The parish priest called him back shortly and told him about a widow whose husband had been recently killed in a logging accident. Jess and his brother-in-law went to the widow's home with the bird and a few of the trimmings.

The woman was going to have a pound of hamburger for herself and her three sons for the holiday meal. One of the little boys came out and, in excited glee, showed Jess his Christmas present, a pair of dime store socks. That was it, but to him his Mom had done everything she could. Santa Claus had come. Needless to say, by the time Jess got through there was not only adequate food on the table, but gifts for all so they would truly enjoy Christmas.

Out of the telling of this story developed "The Group," which has joined together each year and tried to help those who might not otherwise have had an enjoyable Christmas, through no fault of their own.

Last year, The Group took care of a number of families whose needs ranged from food and clothing to little extras that make Christmas so important to children.

The Group operates totally anonymously. In fact, there isn't even an organization. It is just people wanting to help people. We pool our resources, shop for the items, wrap them and deliver them to people who don't even know that they have been considered. We ask no thanks, not even an acknowledgement.

This year we plan to do our thing again. We already know about several families who will need help. Most of the families are working class families who, because of sudden tragedy, accident or unforeseen problems in their lives, will be unable to provide for their families.

We have some funds that we have been gathering over the year to help them. If you would like to supplement or help us and take part in this real meaning of Christmas, we welcome your participation so that we may have enough to do a few more families.

If you know of someone who can use a hand, someone who, because of circumstances beyond their control will have to deny their kids a Christmas, let us know.

As noted earlier, the Group is anonymous. We have no names, we have no faces. It's just people who have banded together to help people. Our efforts are not without reward, however. The knowledge on Christmas morning as we celebrate this wonderful day with our families that someone out there will have a more meaningful Christmas because someone cared is a beautiful feeling.

If you would like to be part of The Group, you may reach us by writing "The Group", c/o Suffolk Life Newspapers, P.O. Box 262, Westhampton, N.Y. 11977.

Readers' Opinion

Open Letter to Henrietta Acampora, Brookhaven Town Supervisor:

The recent, widely disseminated letter "from the desk of Henrietta Acampora... paid for by the Committee to Re-Elect Congressman Carney" struck me as something of a teapot.

You addressed me as a "Friend" who recently "signed a petition which expressed views (you claim you "share") against LILCO and its seemingly constant increase in rates.

You refer, I presume, to the petition that has enabled George Hochbrueckner to run for Congress on Row F, the "Ratepayers Against LILCO" line.

You then expressed outrage at several bills Mr. Hochbrueckner supported as New York State Assemblyman. You said you felt you deserved an explanation. Just in case I felt a similar need, you passed along Mr. Hochbrueckner's phone number.

Let's not fret, Henrietta. Let's look at the record.

A6870A, which would have authorized a PASNY takeover of Shoreham was drafted in the context of the 1981 political climate

when Shoreham's opening appeared to be a foregone conclusion. Wouldn't PASNY's experience with nuclear power, therefore, be preferable to LILCO's bungling?

A11901A called for the state to develop an emergency plan if the county failed to demonstrate good faith in this area. The county has done so, so what's the problem?

A6870A's resubmission in 1984 was an error corrected by Mr. Hochbrueckner, himself, when he struck the enacting clause, thereby killing the bill.

Don't you think you would have displayed infinitely more wisdom by calling 516-736-7171 FIRST rather than circulating thousands of copies of a letter which, like the sound the fury, signifies nothing?

And one more question, Henrietta: If Mr. Hochbrueckner is not to be trusted, why does he enjoy the support of the Shoreham Opponents Coalition, The East Shoreham Opponents, the Citizens' Lobby Opposed to Shoreham (CLOSE), Parents Against Shoreham, and the People's Action Coalition?

Yours truly,
B. Hoyer
Shelter Island

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