

Stop the User

During our annual election interviews with political candidates we discuss a host of issues. At times ideas come out of these sessions which are worth pursuing.

This year, most candidates spoke of the drug problem being one of their top priorities. Some candidates wanted more emphasis on police actions to stop the suppliers. Others wanted expanded educational programs to teach families and students about the perils of drug use. Collectively, a better idea emerged from these discussions that is worth pursuing.

Drug usage today, as it has been over the past two decades, is somewhat socially acceptable. It started with marijuana, which people felt they could turn on and turn off. Hard drugs, such as heroin, were considered taboo, but if you were in certain social settings, this also was considered acceptable. Cocaine, when it first was introduced on a widespread scale, was even considered a status symbol. Its users were said to be high flyers, into big money. The common concept of cocaine on the street was that it was not addictive and worth the price. We have since learned as a society that marijuana has long-range effects. Cocaine is addictive and disastrous, people can become hooked on as little as a few doses. Crack, a derivative of cocaine, is one of the worst drugs because it is, initially, inexpensive and has great appeal to the youth.

Accepting the drug epidemic for what it is, common sense must come into place. The D.W.I. program is probably the best common sense approach to a serious problem that we have come up with. It is based upon the concept that people are going to drink, that we can't legislate that fact out of existence. But we can develop laws that control it. In the past, laws were in place but were not being enforced. Most everyone drank and it was socially acceptable. All too many of us have at one time or another drunk too much and, by the grace of God, gotten home without incident.

The legislature changed a few of the laws, developed a program of mandated sentencing on the first offense. It developed an educational program that made the penalties socially acceptable, that no one, rich or poor, could escape. The first time persons are apprehended for driving while drinking, they generally are charged with driving while under the influence of alcohol. Even a top flight lawyer cannot get the accused out from under this charge. Most plead guilty, the majority that go to trial are convicted. The penalty is uniform, a \$500 fine, and the driver's license is restricted for work use

only. Attendance is required at a mandatory school for rehabilitation where rich and poor must sit in a classroom as peers. In many cases the individual faces publication of the charge, causing great embarrassment to the individual and his or her family. Automobile insurance rates jump three to five times.

A friend of ours who was convicted several years back, sadly reports the episode cost him over \$15,000 when all the bills were totaled. He suffered from emotional pressure at home from his wife, children and friends.

The program has drastically changed the way most of us drink. Ask any bar owner. People who used to consume multiple drinks and then attempt to drive are now often heard saying after the second drink, "I have had my limit." Even at home parties, people have cut back on their drinking. At many social affairs, alcohol is not even served. Consumption of alcohol has declined.

During the interviews, the need for a system to thwart the use of drugs became apparent. Why not a D.W.I.-type program for possession of drugs? For an offense of being in possession of any controlled substance, a person would be subject to arrest. No plea bargaining allowed. If the accused is under 18 years-of-age, the individual cannot make application for a driver's license until the twenty-first birthday. If the person is over the age of 18, or already has a driver's license, it would become a restricted license that would only be valid for work purposes. The individual would face a fine similar to that of driving while impaired, \$500 for the first offense. Mandatory schooling on drug education and a mandatory six month rehabilitation program, with no exceptions, would be part of the sentence.

Wouldn't a program like this be socially acceptable and make people as aware and cautious with drugs as the D.W.I. program has done? With no plea bargaining allowed, the accused, whether rich or poor, would face the same sentence. During the rehabilitation program, those convicted would be constantly monitored, possibly tested for drugs in their system.

The cost of such a program would be minimal compared to incarcerating the person. Second offenses would be considered more serious in nature; fines would escalate. The offender would face not only the loss of the driver's license, but all other licenses issued by the state such as a license for practicing law, medicine, teaching, or a license to do business within the state. Because the entire program would be based upon possession, the program could be

targeted at the buyers, which would eliminate the demand. More people, particularly the youth who consider the possession of a driver's license as their escape to freedom, would think twice before they jeopardized this asset.

We believe this program has merit and should seriously be considered by the state legislature. Something practical has to be done about the drug epidemic. This program might well be part of the answer.

And why not?

Political thoughts

As all of us as citizens have waded through the last four months of political rhetoric, we have probably each said to ourselves, "there must be a better way."

During our interviews we often sat back while listening to the candidates extoll their virtues and condemn their opponents and asked ourselves, why do these people put themselves through such an agonizing ordeal? Do we bring the very best this nation has to offer to elected office? Are these the best people we can hire to do this important job? Unfortunately, the answer to these questions often was "no."

It takes a very special breed of person to be an elected official. Your past, your present, and that of your family, are opened to scrutiny. The game of politics is a game of hide and seek. Charades, mirrors and smoke screens are the standard tools of the day.

After 29 years of political involvement, most of it as a reporter and an editor, I am still amazed how the voters are able to determine who is the best candidate. Probably the most valuable tool the voters had this past election was the extensive questionnaire published in Suffolk Life.

After the interviews with the various candidates were finished, we went over the questionnaires that had to be answered "yes" or "no."

Too often, we had been fooled by their rhetoric, but here in black and white with all emotionalism stripped away, were the true answers of how the candidates really feel about an issue.

We would like to see campaigns shorter. A month's duration is more than enough for the candidates and the voters. We would like to see limited the amount of money that a candidate may accept both from a single source and in total. We would like to see the candidates at the beginning of the election, state their position philosophically and on each issue that has come before the legislature in the past, or that could be predicted to come up in the future. They should be asked to expose their views honestly and then let the voters make the choice.

Terms of office should be limited to stop lifetime careers and the stagnation of new ideas. Candidates would be free to vote their convictions as well as their constituents' desires if they knew their tenure was limited, and they did not have to run for re-election. A recall provision would also be helpful.

We have a fine system of government here in America. Democracy does work. But, even democracy must change and be refined to meet the necessities of time.

And why not?

Top Ten Equal 45%

We were reading an interesting article that dealt with the effects of last year's tax reform that we would like to share with our readers.

There are probably as many people who dislike the reform as approve of it. Personal opinions aside, when the returns were compiled it turned out that the top 10 percent of the wage earners paid a total of 45 percent of the taxes. We were amazed.

We had heard, as have many of you, that this bill worked in favor of the rich. The bottom line indicates otherwise. There are new calls to

soak the wealthy wage earners even further during this election year period, by adding another tax bracket for the high wage earners. It's good rhetoric, but it gets to a point where the successful wage earners will say, "I won't work anymore. I won't try as hard. I'll find a way around the taxes."

Those of us who are not fortunate enough to be in the top ten percent should be grateful that those people are contributing 45 percent of the taxes.

And why not?

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Gov. Cuomo's Deal

The Shoreham deal is now, as it always has been, in the hands of Governor Mario Cuomo. The Suffolk delegation of the legislature has indicated its willingness to meet with the governor to talk about ways of mitigating the damage the governor's deal will cause to the Island's economy and to the ratepayers.

The governor has indicated through his representatives that he does not wish to meet with the delegation directly. He will work through third parties. This is unfortunate, for the governor is seeking the support of the legislature, support it can't give based upon his take it or leave it attitude.

The governor promised, weeks ago, to come up with 14 points that he felt were negotiable and would ease the objections to his deal. He hasn't yet kept this promise. Many of us who have been close to the opposition to the deal have felt that his talk of 14 points was hot air and rhetoric, nothing more. His refusal to keep his promise by releasing these points, which he vows would help resolve the opposition, is unfortunately proving us right about rhetoric and hot air. We say unfortunate because we would rather be wrong in this instance. We would much prefer that the governor worked with us, not against.

The governor, over the past five years, has been in a position to ensure that the outcome of Shoreham was different than the current scenario. Although publicly he put up a good front of opposing the plant, in reality he held the cards to close the plant by directing the Public Service Commission to stop the PSC imposed subsidies from ratepayers in the form of repeated

rate increases, financial stability adjustments, and construction funds for Shoreham that have kept LILCO afloat. He will tell you once he appoints commissioners he has no further contact with them. He does not convey his feelings or influence their decisions. His saying it doesn't make it true. Nowadays the governor and his men take credit for recent appointments that, supposedly, make the PSC more cognizant of the public's financial ability to pay. If he now wants credit, he also has to shoulder the blame for permitting the public be damned attitude of PSC staff and commissioners that has existed far too long.

The Public Service Commission has been a partner in the creation of the controversial deal which rewards LILCO at the expense of the ratepayers, following Cuomo's directives without a whimper. During the five year period Cuomo could have replaced many of the members of the Public Service Commission and, in fact, could have replaced the chairman. Instead, he let the pro-utility commission stand and kept the chairman a hold-over appointee. And they kept giving away ratepayers' dollars.

If the governor can put his ego aside and will listen to the legislators who are returning from listening to the constituents, he might find a solution that would work to alleviate some of the hardship he is directly responsible for bringing to Long Island.

Legislators who have opposed the governor's deal have a list of suggestions they want Cuomo to agree to, suggestions outside the deal, but which must be incorporated in legis-

lation to ensure Long Island some relief and protection in the future. The governor can have his way because the deal does not have to be renegotiated, which he has flatly refused to do. But the public will also be protected, which has been the goal of the opposition by legislators, beyond the closing of Shoreham.

The elections are over. Is the governor big enough and man enough to

put aside his ego and politics and work out a sensible resolution in the few days that are remaining? Will he put an end to the rhetoric by his aides, the battle of the press releases, the planted stories, and sit down, eyeball to eyeball, with those who also want Shoreham closed, but also want future protection for the ratepayers?

And why not?

Campaign Coverage

The news and editorial staff here at Suffolk Life are proud of the contribution that they made to the election coverage, 1988.

Suffolk Life is a non-partisan newspaper where the opinions expressed are the collective viewpoints of those who are covering the campaigns.

Our news reporters who are assigned to cover the candidates and the issues are given a mandate to balance their stories, present both sides of the issues, and to keep their own personal opinions out of their writings.

The questionnaires which we publish are the result of hours of painstaking care and concern. The answers the candidates provide give the voters an honest reflection of the candidates' beliefs and philosophies.

The endorsements Suffolk Life makes are the consensus of the news and the editorial board after hours of interviews with the candidates and a review of what is known about them.

This year, some of the endorsements were made in agony. There-

were too many negatives and not enough positives. There were no snap decisions, long discussions were held. In some cases the decisions were easy, either because of the strength of one candidate over another, or the lack of knowledge about issues exhibited. Endorsements are a serious business here at Suffolk Life, not taken lightly or with partisan reasoning.

Now that the election is over, we would like to know what you thought of our coverage. Is it worth the effort that we put into it? Did you find our coverage of value? Did we help you come to a conclusion on the candidate that you chose as your next leader? Did we, at least, give you food for thought so that your decision could be based on information not available elsewhere?

Would you please fill out the survey printed below so we may evaluate our efforts for the future? We appreciate your assistance to help us better serve you.

And why not?

Political pollution

Esthetics goes out the window and political ambition takes its place as Election Day approaches each year. The countryside in far too many areas is marred with the signs of politicians seeking to convince voters to support their candidacy. And, in far too many areas, those same signs remain far after the election, prolonging the election rhetoric far beyond the day of balloting.

Politicians are convinced that name recognition--just the fact that their names appear on street corners and telephone poles, and just about everywhere else there is available space--is enough to earn the votes of the public.

We think the public is smarter than that, and deserves better. We think the "Vote for Joe Candidate" signs are an insult to the voters.

Names on street corners are hardly reason enough to support a candidate, and, in fact, could well be motivation to vote against a candidate who would clutter our area in such a fashion.

The election is now over, and, unfortunately, many of the signs still clutter the countryside. The political pollution remains. In weeks to come we intend to focus on the political pollution that remains, as a reminder to those candidates responsible that they continue to pollute our neighborhoods.

We've all had our fill of the election rhetoric. We need no reminders. A word of advice to the politicians: if you put a sign up, make sure it comes down. Let's stop the clutter and start concentrating on the issues.

And why not?

Reader Survey

The candidate questionnaires included in our election coverage are designed to offer our readers information concerning candidates' views on a large variety of issues. They are created to put the candidates in the position of answering in the same manner in which they would be called upon to vote. Yes or No. The questionnaires represent an enormous commitment of time to prepare, distribute and publish, and a tremendous cost to produce. Is it worth it? Do you, our readers, find this information helpful in making up your minds about the candidates? Should we continue this format? Or devote the time and space to other coverage and issues? You can help us decide these questions--and help us to better serve you--by filling out the form below.

- Please continue the questionnaires. The information is very helpful.
- The questionnaire information is of some value.
- Save your time and effort, we find it of little help.

Comments:

Thank you for your help.

'The Group' gives thanks

Tomorrow, as we gather with family and friends for our traditional Thanksgiving feast, let us give thanks to the good Lord for allowing us to accumulate the food we are about to consume and for the ability to earn sufficiently to purchase it.

We have worked hard over the last year. Most of us have had adversities of one type or another and have overcome them. We have survived and we have prospered. But, there are a few among us who, this Thanksgiving, will not consume half of what we will throw out. They did not have the good fortune, the ability or the opportunity. Chances are an insurmountable tragedy got in the way and put them on the other side of this holiday's festivities.

Over the last two months, "The Group" has been receiving letters from Suffolk residents outlining human tragedies that have crippled normally productive families.

The Group is an unofficial and loosely organized gathering of Suffolk residents who each year during the holidays come together in thanksgiving for what they have, and to help and share with others who don't.

The Group was formed for the first time eight years ago. It was created out of a desire to help others, individuals or families who, through no fault of their own, were in need of a helping hand. People who were struggling to make it on their own, but who were falling between the cracks and were receiving little help elsewhere. Group members soon learned the names of people who faced bleak holidays. Where Christmas would be just another day for the little ones, where the spirit of Santa Claus would not appear. Group members offered whatever resources they could, and their time and effort, to touch these lives. Pooling their resources, they were able to buy clothing to ward off the cold, food to ward off hunger, toys to ward off despair.

Group members personally shop for each child's needs. Supplied with a first name, a sex, an age and critical needs and sizes and a few simple wants, the shoppers go forth with \$100 to spend. Through the generosity of many local merchants, the \$100 often becomes \$200 and \$300 in buying power. On Christmas Eve, mysteriously and anonymously, the recipient families found Santa had come through.

This effort has grown over the years. Last year, close to 100 children awoke to find that Santa had visited them even though many had been told that Santa would not be able to come this year. The pleas for help come right up to the very last minute. The hardest thing for any group member to do is to stop, to say no more. And so, year after year,

"just one more family" adds up to many more families and the effort continues usually to the time that Christmas Eve is really underway.

We are late in getting started in this year's effort, but the Group's efforts will not diminish. We have raised some money, enough to get started, but already there are so many more who are in need than we thought would be there. If you feel as we do, that God has been good to you and provided for you and your family, you may reach out to The Group and help someone else who has not been as fortunate. Your contributions are really needed this year. Those of you who have joined this effort in recent years have made a difference, have added many more families, and scores of little ones, to

the list of happy people who are often so shocked that someone cares, that they may be troubled but they are not alone.

If by chance you know of a family who normally would be able to provide for themselves but have met with a tragedy, an illness or an accident, or any other circumstance that will prevent the kids from having a Christmas, let us know about the family and its needs. Somehow, in the past, we have been able to make our resources meet the demands.

Most members contribute their time and their money, motivated by the realization that there, but for the grace of God, go I. That without the blessings we have received in our lives, our roles could be reversed and we would want someone to help us

anonymously, without red tape, hassle or begging. The recipients never have to look over their shoulder, show their appreciation or even say thank you. The tears that often fall, the brightness in their eyes, is all the thanks Group members could want. And the realization on Christmas morning that there is joy in the hearts and homes of those who have faced bitter struggles.

If you would like to contribute, you may send your contributions to:

The Group
c/o Suffolk Life Newspapers
P.O. Box 167
Riverhead, New York, 11901

The holidays are a special time for most of us. Not so special for some. But we can make a difference.

And why not?

Where the bucks go

Talk about the budget deficit has been focused for a long time on the spend more than we get habits of the federal government. Such talk is now being targeted at the fiscal affairs of New York State, where recent attention has been given to the fact the state budget is out of whack about \$2 billion dollars, perhaps more. This comes as no surprise, considering the spending habits of our state officials.

A case in point: Senate Majority Leader Warren Anderson, who, thankfully, is retiring and will be replaced by Senator Ralph Marino, one of Long Island's delegation, has been very generous with taxpayers' dollars. Anderson's staff members have, for a long time, been getting salaries higher than those of senators, and there have been many complaints that these highly paid staffers seem to have more power than do the senators themselves. While their power will undoubtedly diminish with Anderson's departure, their last days in office will be well rewarded financially.

According to syndicated columnist Alan S. Chartock, who covers the Albany scene for Suffolk Life, Anderson recently gave his two top assistant counsels, Richard Farley and Philip Pinsky, a hefty boost in salary. "Until this year," Chartock reports, "they were making over \$90,000 a year. That is in the same league with the salaries of the attorney general, the state's comptroller and the commissioner of education." Chartock points out that the latter officials are all full time employees of the state. "They do not practice law on the outside. But the counsels in the legislature are part-time employees. So when you examine their immense pay in light of

their part-time work, it really raises the eyebrows."

Raise the eyebrows it does indeed, and those eyebrows are going to fly right off the face in viewing the increases, which boosts the salaries of the two top aides from over \$90,000 to \$126,386 a year. On top of this misuse of taxpayer dollars, you should know that both got early raises this year, which means their salaries were increased by more than 70 percent in one year, according to Chartock.

And you wonder why there is a deficit? Magnify this kind of nonsense throughout the state structure, look at all the no show jobs which reward political favors and loyalty, to name but a couple of ways the politicians dip into the taxpayers'

pockets, and it's easy to see why the money goes out faster than it comes in. And why important needs--such as roads and bridges--have to be put on bond issues because the "state doesn't have the money."

We will be hearing much in the days ahead about the need to "tighten our belts" to resolve the problem of the \$2 billion (and probably more) deficit. Taxpayers ought to let their elected officials know, however, that the first belt tightening had better come in the area of political abuses, such as the Anderson payoff to his aides, before services are cut. And these elected officials should raise a hue and cry to end once and for all the wanton waste that enriches the chosen few at the expense of the people.

And why not?

Spending hot air

County Executive Patrick Halpin and the Suffolk County circus, the legislature, are locked in a very dangerous battle of rhetoric that should be a battle of fact.

The county executive presented his budget, which was bloated and called for tax increases. The budget, we believe, depended too heavily on projected sales taxes for the coming year, revenue estimates that may not materialize. The legislature screamed "foul," said there was no need for tax increases, added \$110 million to the bloat and, by utilizing mirrors and illusions, had the great magician, Don Gruen, head of the legislature's budget office, estimate that Halpin's proposed taxes could be cut.

Gruen's magic is created by simp-

ly revising Halpin's sales tax projection, making it even higher for the coming year. As we stated, we felt that Halpin's sales tax projections were already overstated. Gruen's estimates are ludicrous unless you believe in Santa Claus.

Suffolk County enjoyed huge increases in sales taxes two years ago just prior to the elimination of the sales tax as a deductible item when compiling income tax. December was the last month you could write off sales tax against your income taxes.

In 1987, Suffolk homeowners took out home equity loans in record numbers. This created an enormous amount of spendable income which Suffolk residents used to improve

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Spending hot air. . .

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and furnish their homes, buy cars, boats and otherwise falsely stimulated the economy. 1988 saw the reaper come home to bear. Larger mortgage payments had to be made to pay back the home equity loans and this cut into disposable income. It resulted in purchases being curtailed and, correspondingly, sales tax projected increases falling short of expectations. All of 1988 figures will not be in until the spring of 1989, but the writing is already on the wall. We are not going to take in the kind of monies we projected to cover the governmental expenditures that have already been made.

Most smart forecasters are not looking for any huge strides in spend-

ing by consumers in 1989. Most are only looking for a two to four percent expansion. Some are forecasting a mild recession which will result in a drop in sales tax revenues below the 1988 level.

We believe County Executive Patrick Halpin is aware. He now has the opportunity to take the legislative budget and, line by line, eliminate needless spending. He should do exactly that. And when the legislators are again presented with the budget, they should show fiscal common sense and restraint, put political games aside and work in unison for a stable future for county finances.

And why not?

What If?

Rumors circulated this past fall from normally reliable sources that LILCO realized it had negotiated a deal top-heavy with financial benefits at the expense of the public. According to the rumor, because of growing opposition to the settlement, LILCO officials approached the governor and were alleged to have said, we would be willing to modify the agreement. The governor was supposed to have turned thumbs down. The rumor theorized his ego was in the way, that he wasn't going to change anything for anybody.

Credence to these rumors was given last week when Newsday, the Long Island Lighting Co.'s mouthpiece, published a story on Monday stating that LILCO was willing to compromise. On Tuesday they ran a page two correction stating they had given a false impression based on an editing error. We always have been a believer that where there is smoke, there is fire.

Let us look at the scenario under the present deal. In the bail-out of LILCO, they have negotiated a huge windfall for themselves. The deal, as it is structured, has all the potential for totally, economically crippling Long Island. Long Island is already one of the highest-priced places to live in the nation. Current utility rates play a big part in it. On top of the cost of living, Long Islanders are one of the heaviest taxed peoples in the nation. Our school, town, county and state taxes, when combined, are in such proportion that people from out of state question how we exist.

The LILCO deal is the straw that will break the camel's back. Businesses requiring quantities of energy are forced to relocate. Their more productive and higher paid workers are asked to leave, to go with them. They are enthused about fleeing the high taxes and high cost of living on Long Island. The snowball starts to roll. Real estate values plummet.

Do You Really Want This?

As a resident of Suffolk County, do you really want a legislature to govern you?

The legislature, which came into existence in the mid-60's, has been the laughing stock of the nation. It's considered the joke of governmental entities. Whether it be the quality of candidates the legislature attracts, or the lack of a formal purpose, it has been a costly body of government that offers little to the voters.

Currently, the legislature pictures itself as 18 mini county executives, duplicating the effort of the duly elected county executive. The legislature has led to mass confusion within the government structure. A whole month was wasted in January

High equity in houses was the only thing keeping many residents here. As they see their major investment diminish, thousands more bail out. They can't face losing their homes as work becomes scarce. No new industry can afford to come. They can't make a profit because the cost of doing business on Long Island is too high. As businesses and people flee Long Island, LILCO's sales fall dramatically. Even though enriched by the Shoreham deal, their overhead remains high and, according to Public Service law, rates must be increased to make up for the shortfall in sales. You don't have to have a Wharton School of Finance economic survey to predict the outcome.

What if the management of LILCO looked beyond their nose and foresaw the travesty this deal will cause on Long Island? What if they realized that there was substantial room for compromise? What if they leaked this to the press? What if the governor found out about it and reacted with his typical hostility? What if his ego got in the way?

With the number of favorable decisions coming down each week, suspiciously close to the deadline for action on the settlement, Cuomo has broken promises of releasing 14 points to ease the deal's impact. He reportedly refuses to move election of LIPA board members up to enhance and strengthen the authority he has emasculated. His take it or leave it attitude grows stronger each day. If LILCO truly cared, as their new slogan implies, and Cuomo did too, there should be a way for LILCO and the people to survive. To prevent the above scenario of financial doom from happening. Is the future of Long Island more important than Mario Cuomo's ego? What he does between now and final action on the deal will provide the answer to that question.

And why not?

of this year because the legislators could not figure out who was to be their leader. Just recently, the county executive proposed a budget that was too rich for most Suffolk residents' blood. The legislature heard the cry of the taxpayers and promptly proceeded to add to the bloat rather than trim it. The legislature then passed a resolution which would give them four opportunities a year to add more bloat to the budget.

There has been a move afoot for several years to abolish the legislature, to return to a board of supervisors who would vote according to the population that the towns have. For over two centuries, Suffolk was governed quite effectively by a

board of supervisors. Nassau still is. Suffolk should return to it.

Supervisors know their towns and know their people. They would be able to bring their needs to the county and work out solutions. Supervisors, because they are closer to the people and, thus, more accountable for their spending habits, are more attuned to wiser use of taxpayers' dollars. More so than the legislators who bend to the whims of virtually every pressure group imaginable. Supervisors can restore financial sanity to Suffolk County. The county executive would be left with the day-to-day running of the county and be the person responsible for its success or its failure. We said this when we had Republicans Cohalan and Lo Grande as county executives, we say the same having Democrat Patrick Halpin.

Why go through the effort of electing a county executive to run the show if you are going to saddle him with 18 egotists that are constantly snapping at his heels? Over the years, county executives have spent more time warding off attacks on the executive branch than they have in running the billion dollar business the county has become.

Let's once and for all abolish the county legislature. Let a coalition of business and political people come together, work through Initiative and Referendum to place on the ballot the form of government the people of Suffolk County want and deserve. Let's get started now while there is time to work through the process.

And why not?

Letters to the Editor

Study tax hike

Dear Editor,

I was reading the article on "Study: Hike tax, raise \$65.5 mill." It goes on to say three options are offered. One of them sickens me to no end, raising property tax again. I came from Queens 3 years ago. My mortgage and tax payment was \$317.00. Now out here I'm paying \$1000.00 a month \$312.00 of it is taxes. Since I'm here they've gone up a fortune and now that's another option offered. Why can't they all put their educated heads together and let everyone pay equal taxes. For example the Vets don't pay all the taxes I do and alot of other young families do. So we missed a war now pay higher taxes. How many of the Vets were drafted, never wanted to go to war, they did and now their home free. Let them pay complete taxes and ease up on the rest of us. The vets who were handicapped, of course, shouldn't pay but the others should. Alot of them didn't see even a bullet and their taxes are half mine. There's a tremendous burden on young families especially who purchased Long Island homes in the past 6 years. The prices of the houses are out of control. So the high mortgage rate, price of the house and unfair taxes are killing alot of people. We can't save money, we don't go on vacations, or have entertainment. We live from check to check. It's no way to live, that's barely surviving and it's unfair. The privileges given to the vets to pay half taxes is not fair. If they paid their share then we can save a little money also and that would solve the so called "crises". Long Island will really have a crisis if all the young move away and all that's left are the vets with their half taxes, then they'll have to pay. If the taxes keep going up we will have to move. I wish the salaries went up as fast as the taxes but then that would be fair and thats what is not important.

The services I get out here are not any better than Queens. What I enjoy out here is having a driveway to pull my car into. I can't say there's less drugs or violence. My son was attacked by a young black male, robbed and given a concussion. I could have paid less for that in Queens. To get anywhere out here you need a car. The transportation stinks. The only thing great about L.I. is theres less congestion in the

streets. That is not a service provided for me by Suffolk County, unless you consider them keeping the taxes high and unfair way of keeping people out of L.I. Just a little sick humor. But another \$50.00 a month hike and I'm out of here. Maybe I'll go back to Queens where there sewers another unprovided service. At least it isn't an out house here on L.I. Upstate an hour from the city the other way. Same distance as here, its' a hell of a lot cheaper and maybe its' a good deal better then Suffolk County where they cater to Vets, all vets, not just the ones who deserve it.

I'd really love an answer to that question about the unfair tax law. I'd love to know why I pay almost \$3800.00 a year and some vets pay \$1200.00, some less, some a little higher. Putting my \$3800 with their \$1200. and dividing it in half would be \$2500 for both of us. That sounds great. After all we are getting the same services, for each of them, it should be half & half.

Whether or not you print this letter doesn't matter but to see an article in your paper as to why would prove helpful. It will help me decide if I will stay here or not. I'm truly sorry I ever moved here. It's terrible to make a nice salary yet we can't save or even go out.

Mortified,
P.L.
North Babylon

Correction

Dear Mr. Willmott:

Per our conversation regarding the November 16th, edition of Suffolk Life, I would greatly appreciate a correction concerning the picture on Page 3H.

The "unidentified companion" is my wife, Lisa, to whom I have been married since January, 1987. We are also the proud parents of a five month old baby girl, Ashley, as indicated in the biography which your reporter received.

My disappointment in the caption is the message it sent, and the fact that no check was made to ask who was beside me. That is not the type of coverage characteristic of your paper.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
John J. Flanagan
East Northport

IF FOR ANY REASON,

SUFFOLK LIFE

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