

SUFFOLK LIFE

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Suffolk Life's 1994 Endorsements

It is never easy, but this year making endorsement decisions has been extremely hard.

Suffolk Life, as a newspaper, is not politically attached. We are independent. We do not align ourselves with the Republican or Democratic parties. The editorial board of Suffolk Life places itself in the position of being on an executive search committee. We are looking for the best candidate to fill the position.

In past election years, Suffolk Life has endorsed a good cross-section of both Republicans and Democrats. This year we have endorsed substantially more Republicans than Democrats. We do not apologize for it.

The Democratic Party, for the most part, offered very weak alternatives to the Republicans. They basically hung their candidates out to dry. They did not provide funding for campaigns and even neglected to bring the candidates up to speed on issues. This is tragic, for it subverts the entire electoral process.

This year, in some races where there are exceptional candidates either by their record or by their challenge to the incumbent, the candidate stood out. In these races, we are endorsing. In other races, we are not offering endorsements, which expresses confidence in the ability of the candidate, but rather, our view of who appears the better choice between two candidates.

The components that go into making endorsements are as follows. Reporters are assigned candidates upon their nomination. The reporters report on the candidate's profile, background, and positions on the important issues.

The editorial board makes observations about the candidates' depth of knowledge on the issues, solutions they may offer, if they are ego-driven or sincerely interested in serving, their attitude, respect for truth and for the citizens they are seeking to represent.

We examine the answers to the questionnaires quite carefully. We are strongly disturbed by blank answers. If candidates cannot answer "yes" or "no," their integrity comes into question, particularly incumbents who should have the answers but for reasons best known to themselves, refuse to share their feelings with the voters.

The candidates are interviewed by the editorial board. Normally we spend some time with the challenger, privately, giving them an opportunity to go over their personal history and what brought them to the position of being a candidate. Then, in a freestyle discussion, we have the candidates discuss the issues. Either they ask pertinent questions of each other or we ask the questions. We take particular note to solutions that are offered rather than just identification of the problems. We understand that the challengers will be nervous and not have the hands-on knowledge that an incumbent should possess and take that into consideration.

When the interviews are concluded, the editorial board discusses the strengths and the weaknesses of each candidate. We then vote and the consensus becomes the endorsement. The endorsements are our opinion based upon our year-round interest and involvement in our governmental system. They are not necessarily right or wrong, but our conclusion of our involvement with the process.

We encourage all voters to go back and study the questionnaires for here is where the truth lies. Read the questionnaires, reach your own conclusions, then compare your answers to the candidates and you will have a good idea of who is best for you and who you should support.

Remember, your vote does count, whether it be for or against a candidate. You can make the difference. Because of low voter turnout, combined with a three-way race, in our last gubernatorial election only 15% of the eligible voters in the State of New York re-elected Governor Mario Cuomo and he was free to govern as he saw fit for the last four years.

Three weeks ago, Thomas Galisano jumped into the race as an independent. The fear is that although he has no chance of coming close to winning, he could be what Ross Perot was to Bill Clinton. He could siphon off George Pataki votes and allow Cuomo to sneak in once again. This would be tragic. We encourage citizens not to use their vote on a third party candidate that has no chance of winning.

Do not let your vote be wasted this year. Exercise your right next Tuesday, Nov. 8. And why not?

For Governor: George Pataki (R-C)

An agenda for change

George Pataki is believable, something the current governor, Mario Cuomo, running on the Democratic and Liberal lines, is not.

During our interview with Pataki, we threw a lot of hard questions at him that politicians normally try to squirm around, particularly if they know you do not agree with the answer. Pataki answered all questions head-on without equivocating. Questions ranged from taxes to welfare, from abortion to gun control.

Pataki, in his quest for governor, outlined New York State's major problem, which is affordability. Because of the cost of state government and the mandates it has imposed upon local municipalities, New York State costs more per capita to govern than any other state in the nation, with the exception of Alaska.

Pataki has outlined a controlled spending plan for New York. State budgets will be at least 1% under inflation. Cuomo's last budget increase was 100% higher than inflation. Pataki also outlined a program of tax cuts that would make New York more economically viable and attractive to businesses, industry and ordinary taxpayers.

Pataki has a real sense of what businesses are looking for. He knows he must stop the exodus of businesses and jobs in order for the state to be economically healthy and growing once again. On the other hand, we have Cuomo's record of driving 1.4 million jobs out of the state during his tenure.

Our cost for Medicaid is three times the cost for California. We spend 150% more than California does on each patient. Both California's and New York's programs are mandated. But New York, under Cuomo, has added electives to Medicaid that has driven costs out of sight, not only taking down the state but also the municipalities that Cuomo insists must share in the burden.

Pataki's approach to Medicaid is for managed care and to only offer benefits mandated by the federal government. He asks, "If California can operate its system for one-third our cost, why shouldn't New York enjoy the same economies?"

New York has become a criminal's dreamland. A criminal, on average, will commit 50 crimes before being apprehended.

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INSIDE:

**Police faulted
in DA's report**

**Car lease probe
furor is raging**

'The Group' is at it again

"The Group" will again provide Christmas joy for children of parents who normally are able to do so, but, because of circumstances beyond their control, will not be able to this year.

The Group is a collection of Suffolk residents from all different walks of life. Group activities began 13 years ago, and has grown each year ever since, with more and more participants reaching out to help more and more youngsters.

In that first year, a half-dozen of us had been away on a weekend holiday. It was just before Thanksgiving and we were counting our blessings.

One of the original members of The Group told a story of being able to reach out to a family who had lost their father, providing food, some clothes and a few gifts. The gesture was more than appreciated and provided the bridge to get the family over the edge. We decided that we reach out and help others less fortunate than ourselves.

First Christmas

Upon our arrival back home, we heard of a family that was in desperate need. The mother had told the small children that Santa Claus could not come that year. They had virtually lost everything and there truly was no money to buy even the smallest gift. The Group pooled their resources and, without the mother's knowledge, were able to find out what the legitimate needs of the family were. The Group shopped for the family as if it was their own. Winter clothes were the main ob-

jective, since the kids did not have coats, sweaters or even sufficient underwear. These items were secured, along with some toys that we hoped would bring them joy. The Group volunteers wrapped the packages and, on Christmas Eve, Santa and his helpers delivered Christmas to the mother. She had no idea that she was going to be helped. She had no idea who helped her. All she knew was there were gifts for her children. The tears in her eyes and the look of appreciation on her face said all we needed to know about what The Group's gifts meant to her.

Giving of Christmas

The giving of Christmas had major impact on the lives of those children. Word spread about The Group and by the time elections were over the next year, a number of requests had been made for assistance. The Group reached out to others within the community and asked for volunteers to join through contributions. Each year the needs have grown and so has the generosity of Suffolk residents.

Last year, we were successfully able to provide Christmas for over 60 families throughout Suffolk. Over 250 children benefited, and had the joy of seeing that Santa did come into their lives.

All of us who work in The Group effort are volunteers. Not one cent of the contributions raised are spent on salaries or administrative costs. In the past, even the wrapping paper, boxes and bows have been donated by a generous firm, allowing all the funds raised

to directly help families.

The people we are dedicated to helping are those who normally are able to take care of their own but, because of an accident, a health problem, a loss of income or other perils of life, are not able to do so currently. Requests come directly to The Group, usually through a friend, a neighbor or a family member who brings the circumstances to our attention. Some referrals come from churches, schools or organizations. We make every attempt to verify the circumstances.

The people who we aid are not aware of The Group's identity. Their identity and our identity is not revealed. Care is taken to protect the recipients' privacy. The kids are identified by first names. The family is identified only by alphabetical letters. Volunteer shoppers are given a list of the sizes and the clothing needs. They are also given suggestions for toys and other gifts that the children might like.

Help is given

We have had some retailers who have given us substantial discounts in the past. Some wholesalers and distributors have allowed us the opportunity to buy in bulk at cost. One manufacturer of knitted goods allowed his workers to volunteer their time, use his machinery and materials, to make sweaters and gloves which were donated in bulk to The Group.

All clothing items and toys are carefully inventoried and then individually wrapped and tagged. Just before Christmas, they are delivered to the re-

cipients along with a gift certificate for food and shoes. The recipients' pride is kept intact as they do not have to say thank you, or have to face their benefactors in person.

The Group effort takes an incredible amount of work; it has become massive. Many of us have been with The Group since its inception and people often ask, "Why do you do it?" The Group operates under one simple principle, "But for the grace of God, there go I." None of us know when our fortunes will turn, when we can be hit with a calamity that we cannot overcome. We do it because we love our fellowman. We receive joy by being able to reach out and help someone else in their time of need.

Help is needed

We have been able to grow, to help so many others because of the generosity of thousands of Suffolk residents. If you would like to become part of The Group, contributions are not only appreciated but badly needed.

If you know of someone who is in need and the need can be verified, please let us know. You may correspond with The Group by writing to The Group, PO Box 167, Riverhead, NY 11901.

Your help will be deeply appreciated by those who will benefit. On Christmas morning you will sense a warmth in your heart, thinking about the smiles of happiness and the screams of joy you helped make possible. Won't you join us?

And why not?

Want a 40% reduction in rates?

Long Island electrical ratepayers are the most abused in the nation. On average, they pay almost twice the cost for electricity they would be required to pay if they were not under the control of the Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO). Areas right here in New York State are paying half of what we are paying for electricity.

Governor Mario Cuomo, in what some consider was nothing more than an election ploy, announced he wanted to have the public take over, through two state authorities, the Long Island Lighting Company. It was not surprising that the management of LILCO reacted to this tentative bid favorably. LILCO stock had dropped almost 40% in value over the past year. The drop in the price of stock was not only reflective of the lack of confidence the market had in the LILCO management, but the market's knowledge that utilities, in the future, are facing competition through both wholesale and retail wheeling of electricity.

Regulatory agencies throughout the country are facing challenges both by changes in federal regulation and the courts over rate-setting regulations. Competition is coming and LILCO cannot avoid it. LILCO is more prone to competition than most other utilities because it has deliberately built up huge debt services.

Paid dividends, not debt

During the past five years, LILCO was granted unprecedented rate increases. These increases provided huge profits which could have been used in one of two ways, reduce debt or pay dividends. LILCO chose to keep the stockholders happy and has repeatedly increased dividends out of proportion

to what investors might sensibly consider a reasonable return.

The management of LILCO prudently should have been whacking away at the huge debt that it created during its construction of Shoreham. Part of the rate increases that they were granted as part of Cuomo's Shoreham deal, total thus far 31%, was to compensate them for this debt and allow them to reduce it.

Free marketing

Two years ago, the federal government changed regulations and allowed the free marketing of electricity throughout the United States. Utilities and private power companies that produce electricity prudently and economically can sell this power to other utilities and private brokers. The federal government fostered regulations that mandate this electricity be economically shipped over the grids and distributed evenly where it was needed. Once the power can reach a state, the regulatory agencies or public service commissions were to ensure that the electricity would be wheeled to the local utilities and eventually to the consumer at reasonable rates. This would allow competition between the monopolistic power companies, such as LILCO, and the independent power suppliers who competitively could deliver power cheaper than the monopolistic utilities were claiming they could. One of the prime recipients of the power would be municipal electrical agencies.

Power for Suffolk

Suffolk County has in existence the Suffolk County Electrical Agency (SCEA), which by definition is a municipal agency. County Executive Rob-

ert Gaffney wants to use this agency to bring rate relief to the municipalities, the corporations and the consumers. He wants to engage one of the top law firms, who specialize in applications to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, to permit wheeling power through the SCEA. The money to engage this law firm is in the executive's budget, but requires authorization of the legislature to transfer the funds.

The legislature also is anxious to bring rate relief to the consumers and wants to litigate and lobby the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) to permit wheeling and to eliminate the guaranteed rate of return given to utilities by the commission. Without the elimination of the rate of return, any loss of sales by LILCO, through conservation or competitive purchases, results in a shifting of the burden to the remaining ratepayers. Both proposals are important and a prudent investment of the taxpayers' money.

Politics in action

However, there are two factions opposing each other in the legislature. One faction wants to use a law firm that had been involved in the Shoreham fight, the other faction wants to explore other law firms to secure the best possible firm. Those who have been pushing for the action on the state level will not support Gaffney's proposal unless their plan is also approved. As of last Friday, this internal bickering within the legislature has brought both proposals to a halt. It's pure, raw politics that is hurting the citizens.

If Gaffney is successful at the federal level and the legislature is successful in forcing the PSC to establish rates that are reasonable for wheeling com-

petitively, Suffolk residents could look at a 40% cut in the cost of electricity.

\$9 billion debt

Each month that goes by forces consumers to pay artificially high rates that are driving us off the Island. The worst catastrophe that could happen would be a public takeover of LILCO, lock, stock and barrel. Ratepayers would be locked into paying off over \$9 billion in debt. The initial reduction of electrical rates of 10% will pale in comparison to the 40% to 50% they can save in competition.

The governor already has caused us to pay for the Shoreham plant three times. We can't afford to allow him to force us to pay for it the fourth time. There is not strength in our economy to do it one more time.

Analysis 'confidential'

Cuomo's takeover plan is full of promises, but no documentation to back them up. Richard Kessell, who chairs the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) and David Freeman, the new head of the New York Power Authority (NYPA), refuse to make public a financial analysis reportedly done by Prudential Securities on the feasibility of the takeover plan. Kessell claims the information is "confidential," while Freeman claims the "numbers may change."

Freedom from LILCO is in sight. Freedom from oppressive rates is doable. Cuomo does not have the answers and hopefully now that the elections are over, either he or his opponent will see the light of day when the campaign smoke has cleared and concentrate on competitive power rather than another LILCO bailout.

And why not?

George Pataki's big opportunity

We congratulate Governor-elect George Pataki on his stunning victory. We congratulate the voters for turning out to cast their votes at the polling booths. Voter turnout was at a record high for a gubernatorial election year. That is good news.

Pataki has two huge opportunities that could change the very foundation of New York, particularly, the financial foundation of Long Island. Pataki should immediately become emerged in the energy problem here on Long Island. First, he should put the recently proposed takeover of the Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO) on the back burner. He should carefully select a new chairman of the Public Service Commission (PSC), and move toward appointing new commissioners who are ratepayer sensitive. He must mold a PSC which will demand that the utilities become competitive, and

ensuring that action by opening the transmission lines for other utilities to foster that competition. This will allow the wholesale wheeling of bulk electricity to areas like Long Island, which has long suffered under the monopolistic abuses of LILCO.

The PSC must establish rates for the wheeling of electricity that reflect only the cost of doing so, including charges only attributable to the transmission and distribution facilities of the utility. This will bring about retail wheeling and competition for LILCO, and could drive down our electric rates by as much as 40% to 50%. Pataki should make good on his promise to make commissioners accessible by having them elected rather than appointed.

Pataki should also move to reinstate criminal penalties against utility officials who lie to the regulatory bodies, or allow untruths to be told

on their behalf. The board of directors and executive officers of the utilities must face felony crime charges for illegal activities, including perjury, on behalf of the corporation.

The corporation, itself, must face fines of triple damages for any illegal gains it makes or has made that come about because of dishonest and illegal practices. If criminal actions were still the law, the bunch that brought us Shoreham would be in jail, and the fines would have bankrupted the corporation. Probably nothing more cries out for cleaning up than the PSC. That should be priority number one.

The second opportunity that should be a priority of the Pataki administration is tackling the educational establishment throughout the state. Pataki should seriously consider utilizing the current state aid plus additional monies raised

through general taxation to establish a statewide educational system. This system would provide the basic education from grade one through grade 12, as established by the State Education Department, that leads to a Regents diploma. The state would take over and fund this curriculum and would be responsible for the teachers, the administrators and the buildings and grounds. Teachers would be hired for the educational system by the state. They would be paid comparable salaries with other state workers and be compatible with the wages paid in education in the surrounding states of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Connecticut.

Administrations would be streamlined and centralized. The goal would be to bring administrations back to what they were 10 years ago, when students achieved better than they do today on Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SATs). Administrators would be paid on a comparable basis of what comparable workers are making throughout New York and the surrounding states. This basic, core education funded by the state could cut 40% off the cost of education and local real estate taxes.

Local school boards would be free to offer enhancements to the core curriculum on a menu basis to the local voters. If the voters chose this additional curriculum, the cost would be reflected on local real estate taxes.

Addressing these two New York problems that particularly affect Long Island would make this Island competitive again, and a place its citizens can afford to live.

Pataki has the governorship. The Senate is Republican. The Democrats now must compromise. If they were to stall either one of these programs, the Assembly then could well become Republican in the next election. The Republicans also have serious obligations. For all too long the Republicans in the Assembly have said they are stifled from getting their ideas into the hopper by the Democratic leadership. With the Senate and the governor's office now controlled by the Republicans, the Democrats are going to have to wheel and deal if they wish to accomplish anything.

Republican assemblymen, who have traditionally fallen back on being blocked out, have new bargaining strength. Likewise, the Senate Republicans, who have weakly claimed in the past that they were but one out of three voices in Albany and thus had to give more to get along, no longer have this excuse. They have to produce for the people. If they don't, they should be thrown out two years from now. They can no longer fall back on being the only safeguard the people have to total Democratic dominance.

The people have had their say. They finally have a greater voice in how New York State is going to be run. It is up to the Republicans who were supported by the electorate so strongly last week to provide the leadership to make things happen to resolve the problems that have for so long plagued us.

And why not?

Remember the contract

For the first time in 40 years, the Congress of the United States will have a Republican majority as a result of the election results last week.

The American public was fed up with government, fed up with Congress, fed up with being lied to and conned. These feelings and sentiments were well known, they were certainly not new.

Rep. Newt Gingrich (R-Georgia), minority whip of the House, a feisty, energetic man, recognized this and saw the opportunity to give the American public a reason to believe again. He engineered and authored a "Contract with America" that spelled out 10 things the Republicans would pledge to accomplish if they took control of the House of Representatives. This was something concrete, not rhetoric or sound bites.

The contract was pure and simple, a written pledge signed by the candidates, a contract that the Republicans can't break. Some of the more notable provisions are: congressional term limits, a balanced budget amendment, line-item veto for the President, and congressional reforms. These are only four out of the 10 items that the Republicans promised to deliver on.

During the first 100 days of the next term, we and the American people expect them to deliver on their promises. On the first day of congressional session, legislation should be placed in the hopper on all 10 of these items. They should be the first 10 bills in the House of Representatives and the United States Senate. The bills should be discussed and debated, voted upon and delivered to the President for his signature before our federal income taxes are due.

The people have spoken loud and clear. They want less government, less restrictions, lower taxes, more honesty and openness. They have told President Clinton that he was going in the wrong direction. They did not want America socialized; they want her free and again, a land of opportunity.

Americans want to work hard, earn fair wages and profits, but they want enough left as a reward for their efforts.

We truly want to take care of those in legitimate need, but we do not want to pay for perpetual free-loading and abuses of the system.

We want to maintain a strong, military presence for our own defense, but we do not want to be the policemen for the world.

We want the cost of medical care to be confined, but we want to be free to choose our own practitioners and medical providers.

We want America free of red tape. We want bureaucratic waste eliminated. We want wasteful spend-

ing on needless programs to cease. We want investments in our economy to make us more competitive in this country and abroad.

This is an opportunity to restructure America, get our heads out of the sand, give her a swift boot in the butt and get her growing productively again.

First, however, the Republicans must live up to their commitments and restore the people's faith in government by acting upon the Contract with America.

Failure will mean a loss of faith and a return to a Democratic Congress and Senate.

And why not?

Let truth be known

The Suffolk County Legislature last week approved a resolution asking the governor to investigate charges that District Attorney James M. Catterson had intimidated several public officials who were involved in actions that displeased him. We would hope the governor agrees to the action promptly.

This will bring to three the number of investigations into county actions concerning car leases and other matters. Catterson has been prominently mentioned in all of these actions. The validity of these charges must be borne out by the investigations currently underway and the latest request to the governor. Intimidation by the county's district attorney to force his will upon the affairs of county government beyond his jurisdiction would be shamefully wrong, if true.

We totally support a full investigation into this matter, but agree with those who argued that a request to the governor for the removal of Catterson from his office without a full investigation would be wrong. The principle of justice in our land stipulates an individual is innocent until proven guilty.

We have not formulated any position on the accuracy of the charges. We

have a high level of respect for Dr. Mary Hibberd, the county's health commissioner, who has said she was the target of intimidation by Catterson in the form of a threat that he would initiate a grand jury action into programs under her control. Catterson denies threatening "any public official or private citizen with a grand jury investigation." He claims he is the target of a "political vendetta" against his office. That's his side of the story. Meanwhile, there are four claims, including Hibberd's, of pressure being applied by Catterson.

Investigate! All the charges, and the entire car lease deal, should be fully investigated. Let the facts all come out and the chips fall where they may. If the power of the district attorney's office is being abused, let's find out first, and then do whatever has to be done to put an end to that abuse. If there has been any wrongdoing in the matter of the car leases, let the truth be known first, and then corrective action can be applied.

Until all the facts are known, it's time to stop flexing muscles and get on with the business of good government.

And why not?

Thanksgiving 1994

Thanksgiving Day is upon us, a time to offer thanks for the blessings of our lives. For some, the list is long—our lives have been blessed with good health, good fortune, and happiness. Others may face burdens which often challenge our ability to see beyond the dark clouds overhead. If we take the time to reflect, however, we can all find much to be thankful for.

Despite scattered outbreaks of violence, we live in a more peaceful world than we ever dared imagine. We live in a free nation, a land of opportunity where we have the freedom to speak our mind, to make choices that some in other lands still strive to enjoy. Our land is challenged by many problems, but we have the power as a people to express our will to our governmental leaders, as we did on Election Day, to search out the solutions needed to make all our lives better.

We offer thanks for those opportunities, and our gratitude that despite the strife and turmoil that too often captures our attention in the news happenings of the day, there is much good beneath the surface of our society.

Thanksgiving is traditionally the official start of an activity by people from all walks of life who come together to create The Group, a caring effort to bring happiness into the lives of those who are experiencing, through no fault of their own, difficult times. As we approach that most precious time of year when good will on Earth be-

comes more than mere words, it becomes a way of life. The Group reaches out to touch the lives of those who need a helping hand, a realization that they are not alone in dealing with the tremendous challenges in their lives.

Each year, and this coming holiday season is no exception, members of The Group express their thanks for the blessings they enjoy by sharing with others so that the joys of the holiday season might be experienced by those who have come upon hard times. Parents who are unable to offer their youngsters any hope for a joyous Christmas, symbolized by that wondrous birth in a manger, find to their amazement that the spirit of the season has touched their lives through people they don't know, and will probably never meet.

There are no words that can describe the looks on the faces of those who, in response to a knock on their door, find Christmas being delivered by strangers. Tears come to the eyes of the mothers, and fathers too, as bags filled with presents bearing tags with the names of their children are placed in their possession. Warm coats to fight off the cold, shoes if needed, sweaters, other items of clothing, and several items that their children have asked for and dreamed about receiving, and some toys, children should have toys, are in the colorful packages their children will open Christmas morning.



It starts with a request for help for a family by a friend who is unable to take on the burden, or by an organization that knows the need. A list is prepared of the children in the family, their needs, their sizes, and a few of their "wants." The family becomes known only by a letter of the alphabet, and shoppers are assigned to purchase the items on the list. Shoppers become emotionally involved in finding the items needed, and very often dig deeper into their pockets to buy an extra present that "Johnny" or "Mary" would surely love.

Without the generous offerings from those who support The Group in spreading the joy of Christmas, this would not be possible. Each year more and more wonderful people join in the effort with their contributions. Businesses have offered large reductions in prices so that the money collected stretches further. One business generously provides the boxes and wrapping paper and bows that are utilized by volunteers in the wrapping process.

Not one cent of the money received goes for operational costs of The Group. It all goes to reach out to one extra family, a few extra children.

We offer thanks to all those who have made The Group possible, and its efforts to grow larger each year, reaching the lives of hundreds of children who would otherwise have not known that so many special, caring people exist.

You can become a member of The Group by offering a contribution to: The Group, PO Box 167, Riverhead, NY 11901. On behalf of those whose lives you will touch, we offer our thanks.

The staff of Suffolk Life would also like to offer thanks for our family of readers who have helped us to provide a publication that is dedicated to those it serves, and to our many advertisers who make it all possible.

And why not?

Political motives and high rates

Long Island residents have been screaming for years about the bankrupting impact of Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO) rates. Businesses closed their doors here seeking lower costs elsewhere, jobs were eliminated, and the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) kept giving LILCO rate increase after rate increase. No one, it seemed, cared.

First solution

Then one day, Suffolk County Executive Robert Gaffney took an airplane ride. He found himself seated next to a man who was involved in developing support for the competitive wheeling of electrical power. They started talking. Out of that conversation came a Gaffney call for action on the federal level to seek authority from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for Suffolk County to use its own Suffolk County Electrical Agency as a means of bringing low cost power to relieve the LILCO rates, the highest in the nation.

Then came others

Meanwhile, several county legislators were talking up a proposal to petition the PSC to reduce LILCO rates, and to eliminate the guaranteed rate of return LILCO enjoys. That guaranteed rate of return protects LILCO from a loss of sales through conservation or competitive purchasing, resulting in a transfer of the financial burden onto the shoulders of the remaining ratepayers.

Still other legislators were involved in talks with a local law firm who was seeking to have the county join in with private parties to launch an antitrust action suit against LILCO over the use of LILCO's transmission system.

From a situation where no one seemed to be doing anything about resolving the LILCO rate problem, we now find ourselves up to our ears in potential solutions. Each proposed solution carries with it the need to hire a law firm to pursue legal action, and a heavy dose of politics to make sure that one solution doesn't get the nod—and the credit—over another.

Action is stalled

Gaffney came up with a resolution which was placed before the Suffolk County Legislature seeking permission to transfer \$200,000 from one budget category to another to hire a Washington law firm to begin the process before FERC. The group of legislators who want to petition the PSC for rate reductions and the guaranteed rate of return elimination filed their own resolution. Politics then raised its head and stalled action.

Fears that if the FERC application was approved first it would spell defeat for the PSC plan caused legislators to stall action on the Gaffney bill. Some legislators had expressed opposition to the PSC route, primarily because the law firm picked by the PSC group was a New York City firm, Hill, Betts and

Nash, which had profited handsomely by previous county suits against LILCO in regards to Shoreham. To overcome their fears about rejection, the PSC group decided to link the FERC and PAC (political action committee) resolutions together. That way, those who supported the FERC action would be forced to approve the PSC plan as well.

All or nothing

The third group, which was solicited by the local law firm, also harbored its own fears of rejection. The solution? You guessed it, link all three resolutions together in an all-or-nothing-at-all format.

That's where it stands, with the legislators expected to act today on the consolidation of all three resolutions.

If we could take politics out of this picture and insert common sense, this is what would happen:

First, the legislature would pursue the filing of an application with FERC for authority to wheel low cost power through the Suffolk Electrical Agency without delay. Competitive power has become a new way of life in the world of electric generation, and Suffolk County, which has labored for too long under the thumb of LILCO, must be freed of that burden.

Confer with Pataki

Secondly, before spending taxpayers' dollars for legal fees to petition the state PSC for rate relief or elimination

of the guaranteed rate of return given utilities, the legislature should officially contact Governor-elect George Pataki, urging he give these matters top priority in his new administration. He must change the current makeup of the PSC, name a new chairman, and set down some firm policy guidelines for their future actions. If Governor Mario Cuomo had been re-elected, it would have been necessary to fund legal actions to solicit the PSC change. He wasn't. We have new hope that the change we have sought for so long may be within our reach. It is our hope that Pataki will be a partner in our efforts to get the rate relief we sorely need. Before we enrich the treasury of a law firm, we must offer him that opportunity.

Class action suit?

The third proposal would have the county help underwrite an antitrust lawsuit against LILCO for blocking free use of its transmission facilities. If this proposed suit has merit, we would suggest that the businesses who have been deprived of low cost power consider a class action legal battle on this matter.

The high cost of energy has taken its toll upon the business and personal lives of our area. Efforts to bring about a needed solution must be free of politics or proposals which benefit favored law firms. Let's get on with it!

And why not?

A bridge to somewhere

The Shinnecock Golf Club in Southampton will once again be the host of the U.S. Open. The tournament is planned for June of 1995. The U.S. Open is one of the most prestigious tournaments in the world, one which is a cherished dream for any chosen location.

Shinnecock has been chosen twice as the host during the past decade. This is unprecedented. The Shinnecock Golf Club, which offers a Scottish course-type challenge, is located directly to the north of Southampton College. The college is used as a staging area for the television crews, for parking and for

visitors. To get to the golf course, crowds must cross County Road 39, the extension of the Sunrise Highway.

Suffolk County Executive Robert Gaffney, to facilitate the safe movement of traffic and people, had proposed building a pedestrian bridge across this highway. The cost of this bridge is estimated to be about \$250,000, a huge sum of money in these tight financial times.

Suffolk County legislators, we believe foolishly, eliminated this expenditure out of the executive's budget, then after he vetoed that action, overrode his veto. We say foolishly because we

do not believe the legislature has seriously looked at the financial ramifications of hosting this tournament.

The tournament will bring into the area tens of millions of dollars, money that will be subject to sales tax and money spent by people who, if treated right, will return to enjoy the glories of eastern Long Island.

The tournament will jump-start the tourist season. It will bring positive publicity to an area that desperately needs it. Hundreds of additional jobs will be created. Opportunities will abound for new entrepreneurs who will try to cash in on this world-class event.

This is a county road, it is the county's responsibility to move people safely and expeditiously. Relying on stopping traffic to move people across this busy and dangerous highway will cause massive tie-ups and impose safety problems for the visitors.

The quick fix "solutions" put forth by Suffolk County Legislator David Bishop (D-Lindenhurst) are worth little consideration. First he said the county should rely on unpaid volunteers to direct traffic, which does not resolve the matter of traffic tie-ups or the potential danger to pedestrians who may seek to rush across a busy roadway. Then he said the county should be able to rent a bridge for \$25,000. Of course, he didn't say from where.

Bishop proved he knows little about the importance of this event or, for that matter, about the tremendous appeal of golf. Bishop said the override was a matter of "priorities, principle and fiscal prudence." Bishop added, "We're talking about funding for a game played by wealthy individuals, watched by wealthy individuals for the benefit of wealthy individuals." Is he kidding or what? Golf is a game that has become extremely popular with people from all financial levels and walks of life. Bishop should sit at a golf course on a busy weekend to see the long lines of golfing enthusiasts waiting to tee off. He ought to explore the financial ramifications golf already has in this county, and what economic benefit the Open would bring.

One accident could cost more in legal fees than the bridge itself would cost. The legislators, in their desire to be frugal, should also be driven by knowledge, not political grandstanding. The county should put out the welcome mat for the U.S. Open. There are many communities throughout this land that would go to any extreme to bring this event to their area. Suffolk County should do no less. Allocations for the bridge should be restored.

And why not?

Why the rush for GATT?

What is GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade)? Don't know? Don't feel bad, most of us don't know either.

GATT is an international trade treaty that will create a world trade organization. Member countries who sign the trade treaty will give up certain sovereign powers to this world trade organization.

GATT is supposed to level the playing field, reduce trade barriers and create a smoother way for international trade. Although GATT has been proposed and talked about for a few years, little has been written about it. Few talk shows have discussed it, and television news has all but ignored it. While few details

have been disseminated yet, some are warning that this trade treaty could have such far-flung ramifications that it could interfere with rules in a country's workplace.

A business in the United States could be found in violation and brought up on charges in front of a world tribunal without true due process of law. Unlike the United Nations, where the superpowers have a vote in proportion to the size and the power of its country, the U.S. voice would be reduced to the same as any developing Third World country.

Congress is being called back into session for extremely limited debate on this issue. The House is only being allocated 90 minutes for each side. The

Clinton administration is pushing for a vote during the first week of December. There is so little known, less understood and some of the frightening ramifications only now being discussed, we cannot see how Congress, in good conscience, can act responsibly by voting so swiftly. The alternative to voting would be to vote "no," which would require the treaty to come under the full scrutiny of the nation, which is what should happen in the first place.

GATT may be good; GATT may be bad, but it is not the kind of thing that should be rushed through a lame-duck Congress in the dark of the night. Action on GATT should be delayed until next year.

And why not?

Start them at the bottom

They are coming by car, train, plane and even boat to Albany. The Republican Party faithful, after 20 years of being locked out of Albany, are descending upon the state capital in search of political plums.

These are the high flyers from Niagara to Montauk who are looking for the choice jobs, the lush salaries and the bountiful perks. Lesser people are looking to fill the rank-and-file jobs formerly held by the Democrats.

Governor-elect George Pataki and his transition team are plowing through the huge pile of resumes trying to find the most capable people to award the political spoils to. They will have plenty to choose from.

Pataki and Company should not make the mistake that other politicians have made in the past. Many of the Democrats, who will soon be making their exit, commanded the salaries that they were receiving not only out of patronage, but because of longevity and institutional knowledge they had gained during their governmental employment. Those who are filling their shoes should be reminded that you don't get the same salary as a senior official when you are going to be doing on-the-job training. This gives Pataki a good opportunity to slash the administrative budget by 20% to 30% while fulfilling patronage needs.

There is no legitimate or logical reason to grant the incoming employees the same salary or the same benefits that someone who had longevity was receiving. In the private world, when a position is being filled, rarely do you fill it with someone who will be granted the same salary as their predecessor, and most especially not if the level of job ex-

perience is not equal. This is what downsizing is all about.

When corporations reduce their staff to survive economically, they fill positions with entry level employees, or employees who are compensated based upon their experience in the field, at entry level salaries for those positions. If

Pataki follows the private sector's lead, he can demonstrate early on that he is serious about cutting back on the cost of New York's government.

Failure to do this will signal business as usual, something that Pataki and the State of New York cannot afford.

And why not?

Message to LIRR

Needed help for Long Island

A trio of Long Island leaders, Long Island Association President Matthew T. Crosson, State Senator Kenneth LaValle (R-Selden) and State Senator Norman Levy (R-Freeport) have raised a call for action that deserves the support of all county officials and residents.

Crosson, LaValle and Levy have urged Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) President Thomas Prendergast to award a multi-million dollar contract for 115 new bi-level cars to a German company that proposes to build the new rail cars at the Northrop Grumman site at Calverton. This would create hundreds of new jobs for Long Islanders, and could be the start of the manufacturing diversification sorely needed to replace the decimated defense industry in this area.

According to a statement released by the three leaders, American Coach and Car of Germany has agreed to use the engineering and electrical component ex-

pertise of Northrop Grumman, and to build the cars at Grumman's former Calverton Naval Weapons Facility at Calverton. In addition, American Coach and Car, the main bidder for the new cars, would utilize about a dozen Long Island companies to provide components and technical expertise to assemble the cars. According to LaValle, "This project can help revitalize existing Long Island companies across Long Island. The Calverton facility is perfectly suitable for this manufacturing job, and will create hundreds of jobs for area residents. It even has a rail line that goes right to the plant. This is a win-win situation for Long Island." We wholeheartedly agree.

We also firmly agree with a call by Levy that "all our legislative colleagues support this bid." All officials on the state, county and local issues should join forces with Crosson, LaValle and Levy

in this effort. This is an example of not only calling for action to resolve our problems, but to specify the action that is needed to do so.

Long Island has endured many problems that have reached far beyond its own ability to resolve. But this solution is within our reach. It's time those who are a part of this area give back to the area, and the Long Island Rail Road should do the same.

We would urge an immediate consolidation of support for this proposal. We would revise it only to demand, not simply urge, the railroad management recognize it has a strong responsibility to the area and its people. If the LIRR wishes to profit from its operations here, it must be a part of the solution. Accepting the bid that would do the most for Long Island would be a giant step in that direction.

And why not?