

## County

### Budget woes

The Suffolk County Legislature last week held joint committee hearings on County Executive Robert Gaffney's \$1.649 billion 1996 proposed budget, which produced complaints some agencies are short in funding or positions.



## Local

### Campaigns

With Election Day less than a week away, Suffolk Life provides final analysis of the First Legislative District and North Fork political races, including candidate profiles and viewpoints.

# SUFFOLK LIFE

## NEWSPAPERS

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NEWSPAPERS

## Southold Town Supervisor

### Thomas Wickham (D-US)

In what has become a very heated political race, Suffolk Life's editorial board reluctantly endorses incumbent Southold Town Supervisor Thomas H. Wickham (US-D).

Although, in the opinion of the board, Wickham is at times arrogant, condescending, and seemingly unconcerned with public opinion, he has made a serious effort to cut spending and provide tax relief for Southold residents, as his proposed 2.65% tax reduction for 1996 indicates. While some claim that this tax cut is political in motivation, the reality is that the reduction is due to his careful management. Wickham has also offered serious solutions for preserving the

environment of Southold, as well as its rural nature.

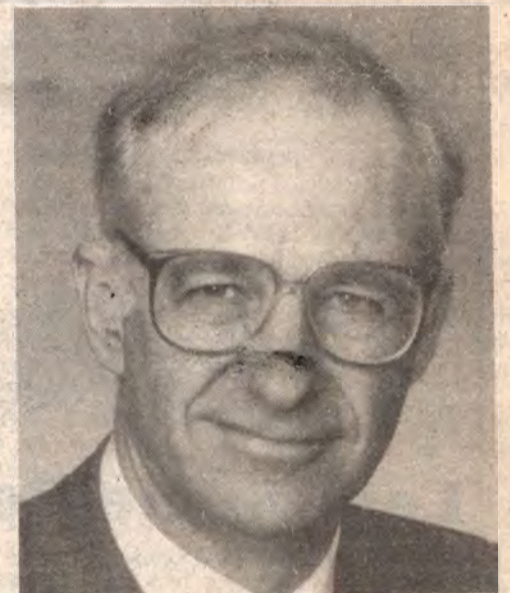
The decision to endorse Wickham was not an easy one to make, as the board found his personality difficult to endure, especially in light of Jean Cochran's friendly, caring, and open demeanor, not to mention her invaluable contributions to the town.

Unfortunately, Cochran has offered few solutions during the course of her campaign. Her apparent willingness to cater to the wishes of the police department was viewed by the board as disturbing. The fact that Cochran's son is a sergeant on the force is also problematic and will—in our view—

—most likely cloud her judgement in future matters relating to the police.

Wickham, on the other hand, has made a concerted effort to question and monitor the department's budget; even the police must undergo budgetary review in these times of economic decline. And, as far as police hiring is concerned, Wickham, as the senior town executive, has the right to determine who is and is not suitable for employment by the town.

Therefore, with reservation, Suffolk Life endorses Thomas Wickham. Yet, if elected, the supervisor must become more personable and refrain from treating others as his inferiors.



Thomas Wickham

## Southold Town Board

### William Moore (R-C-F)

While Suffolk Life's editorial board was divided in its attempt to nominate a candidate to fill one of the two seats on the ballot for town board, it did reach a unanimous decision to fill the second position.

The board feels that the Southold GOP has run a low level campaign in which it has attacked Supervisor Thomas H. Wickham without offering its own solutions for the town's woes. Despite this perception, William D. Moore (R,C) received unanimous support for an endorsement.

Moore's extensive experience with zoning issues will bring a fresh perspective and vast knowledge to the present board. His comments regarding the unification of business, government, and citizenry are right on target.

The Mattituck attorney also scored highly in the Suffolk Life debate when he suggested that, as far as the town's crime dilemma is concerned, he trusts neither the supervisor nor the police department, because, in his estimation, both "have an agenda."

While the vote for Moore was unanimous, choosing a second candidate proved to be difficult. With a split vote, the board could not determine a winner between the incumbent, Hussie, and Supervisor Thomas H. Wickham's (US,D) running mate, Richard L. Cag-

giano (D,US).

Those on the board who favored Hussie feel that she has provided valuable insight to the board while serving the people and their interests on a consistent basis. Hussie is also open and honest with the public and, at the same time, serves as an excellent balance on the United Southold dominated council. Hussie's fiery personality constantly keeps Wickham on his toes, placing him in the position of explaining and justifying his decisions and viewpoints. Her leadership as chair of the Solid Waste Task Force Committee has been extraordinary.

Caggiano appealed to others on the board because of his desire to bring business and government together to achieve common goals, and his low-key but common sense approach to the town's problems. He impressed at the Suffolk Life debate when he suggested that, now that the tourist season has concluded, the town ride out the winter in order to see what transpires with its pending Civil Service hearing, rather than jumping the gun on police hiring.

Therefore, while Suffolk Life unanimously supports Moore, we cannot give Hussie or Caggiano the edge. The choice for this seat is yours. However, we urge voters to review our questionnaires to determine how the candidates' views compare to yours.

## Shelter Is.

## Endorsements

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# Suffolk Life endorsements

Suffolk Life endorsements are the consensus of the editorial board. They do not necessarily reflect the choices of the management or ownership of Suffolk Life. In fact, in some races they were out-voted by members of the editorial board.

The process that we use starts with our determination to hopefully find the best candidates to serve the public. All candidates are interviewed by reporters who closely follow the campaigns as they progress to Election Day.

The candidates are invited to answer the questionnaires that are published in Suffolk Life. We examine these very carefully and base a good portion of our decisions to endorse on the answers candidates give to these questions.

The candidates present themselves to the editorial board. We ask pertinent questions, and the candidates, using a cross-fire technique, debate their positions.

At the conclusion of these interviews, the editorial board meets and reviews each candidate. In a round-table format, we discuss their strengths and their weaknesses. A

vote is then taken, and a consensus of the editorial board results in the endorsement.

We present our conclusions. We hope you will examine them carefully. Study the questionnaires and go to the polls next Tuesday and cast your vote for your choice.

Be sure to vote on the propositions. We encourage you to vote "no" on the Constitutional question which is tentatively scheduled to be Proposition 3. If this proposition is passed, the politicians will no longer be accountable to the voters and taxpayers of New York State. They will be able to borrow money, without your approval. Do not give them an open checkbook.

We offer you our endorsements based on our personal observations of the campaigns and our hard-hitting questioning of the candidates. The choice is ultimately yours. Vote as you choose, but please be sure to vote. A concerned public will receive concerned representation. An apathetic public will, unfortunately, get what it deserves, an apathetic, non-caring government.

## Suffolk County Executive

# Robert Gaffney (R-C-I-RTL-FP)

Unfortunately, there is no contest here. Robert Gaffney's mission, upon taking office as Suffolk County executive, was to straighten out the horrible financial mess that Suffolk County was in. He did it. He restored Suffolk's financial integrity and was successful in increasing our bond rating to "investment grade" from its former "junk bond" rating.

The next most important accomplishment that Gaffney spearheaded was bringing under control the Department of Social Services. He successfully brought John Wingate in as commissioner. Wingate instituted sweeping reforms of the department under a workfare program, "Suffolk Works." Through fingerprinting, welfare fraud has diminished. More stringent guidelines have reduced the case load. Eligible welfare recipients are given a choice, get out of the system or we will put you to work. Personnel has been assigned to do front-line detection work which has eliminated some of the abuses and made available money for those who are truly in need.

Wingate and Gaffney have regularly met with communities impacted by welfare and developed a resolve to some of the more pressing problems.

Gaffney is responsible for enlarging the Suffolk County police force. He has brought the manning of this department from just over 2,000 to 2,600 officers. The public has cried out that public safety is one of their primary concerns; Gaffney answered it.

To accomplish these goals, Gaffney is responsible for raising the sales tax by one-half percent. Gaffney is also responsible for not sunsetting Halpin's one-half percent sales tax as he had promised he would.

Before the year is ended, the sales tax should be reduced from 8.5% to 8.25%. This is not enough. When Gaffney ran for office he had pledged that he would reduce the sales tax to 7.5%. If he and the county legislature have the will, they will accomplish this over the next three years, but, it will be difficult.

Financial problems the county will be facing during 1996 and 1997 include the funding for the new police officers put on the streets. All told, there could be a shortfall of between \$50,000,000 and \$500,000,000 depending on the outcome of the Shoreham certiorari suit.

Tony Bullock earned our admiration as a county legislator and a town supervisor. He is a hands-on manager and has the talents well suited to run a small town. We have been disappointed, however, in his campaign for county executive. Staged press conferences at the door of the county executive's office, or silly slogans, are little more than political gimmicks at a time when the county's problems call for sensible and serious efforts.

During his tenure, East Hampton benefited from a surge in the creation of expensive second homes. This increased the tax base while not impacting on services. Even with these new-found revenues, Bullock called upon the taxpayers, five years in a row, to contribute more. Some of this money was needed to fund voter-approved bonds for open space acquisitions. Some of it was needed to meet the state-mandated solutions to the garbage and environmental programs, and some was used to grow government.



Robert J. Gaffney

Bullock surprised some of us by appearing to be unprepared. Bullock seemed taken aback when Gaffney criticized his record on the town level and provided documentation to back up the charges. Bullock also seemed disorganized and had no concrete plan for dealing with the current county problems or the problems that we see coming down the pike.

Bullock's personality is sometimes confrontational. If he was successful in becoming county executive and the legislature remains Republican, it would be chaos all over again.

Bullock did not make the case that Gaffney has not done the job or that he had the vision or the ability to do it better.

Gaffney's most outstanding weakness has been his hands-off style of management. This is fine if you have top people on your team. Gaffney does not. The controversial car leasing fiasco is one prime example of the impact of Gaffney's being out of the loop on important matters.

Gaffney needs people that are 100% loyal to him and that are accountable. We said four years ago Gaffney would be measured by the people he surrounded himself with. He got by this four years by the skin of his teeth. He should reorganize his staff if he wants to have another successful four years in the future.

On balance, Suffolk Life endorses Robert Gaffney.



Robert W. Doyle

A most important selection

# Supreme Court Justices

One of the most important selections you will make on Election Day is choosing the candidates who will become Supreme Court justices for the next 14 years.

Candidates are very limited in what they can say and do during the campaign process because of the Judicial Canon of Ethics. Because of this, we have only rarely endorsed a judge, and this was based upon personal knowledge of the candidate.

In this year's election, there is one judge that we highly recommend. He is Justice Robert W. Doyle.

We first became aware of Doyle in his quest to become a County Court judge. He was young, energetic and a Conservative. Conservatives often ran, but they were rarely successful.

Doyle ran his own campaign, right down to picking up and delivering his own flyers. He had in tow a couple of his kids and his dog.

Doyle squeaked out a victory and went on to become an outstanding criminal court judge. He quickly earned a reputa-

tion for being a tough, no-nonsense type of jurist. He had 16 years trial experience, and it showed.

In 1981, Doyle was selected to be a candidate for Supreme Court justice of not only the Conservative party, but the Republican party. He was the hands-down choice of everyone who knew him. He was victorious and was seated as a Supreme Court justice in 1982.

Doyle has earned an enviable reputation for thoroughness, fairness and a devotion of the law. He is highly respected by those he works with every day in the court. A testimony to this is the huge amount of endorsements that he has received from law enforcement and court personnel organizations.

It is Suffolk Life's pleasure to add our endorsement to this long list of respected organizations. Doyle is our first choice. You will find his name in fifth position on the ballot. If you vote for only one justice, make sure it is Doyle.

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1st LD

## Michael J. Caracciolo (R,C)

Michael J. Caracciolo is a rarity amongst today's politicians: he's honest and, for some unknown reason, he has the audacity to represent those who elect him, rather than those who determine policy within his political party.

Caracciolo is also experienced. In fact, before being hung out to dry by the Republicans in 1993, Caracciolo held the First Legislative District seat for four years. Caracciolo left office for one reason: he sided with the people and voted against the continuation of the temporary sales tax increase, thus costing him the GOP renomination.

All too often we hear politicians say they are for the taxpayers. They will do what is right by them; then, when elected to office, they raise taxes, break their pledge and vote against the people.

On the sales tax vote, Caracciolo showed his mantle. He stood up to the political bosses, faced intimidation and threats. Now is the time that the voters can reward Caracciolo for his loyalty to them rather than to the politicians.

It should be understood that Caracciolo's opponent, James McManmon (D), is also an exceptional candidate; the editorial board would have to engage in creative stretches of the imagination to find serious flaws with his candidacy.

Nevertheless, Mike Caracciolo has the edge because of his experience and a willingness to stick his neck out for the people he represents. Such qualities have led to a unanimous endorsement for Caracciolo by Suffolk Life's editorial board.

2nd LD

## George Guldi (D)

In the Second Legislative District, Suffolk Life endorses incumbent Democrat George Guldi over Republican challenger Lisa Durham.

Durham is an accountant and victim's rights advocate from Amagansett who has successfully lobbied for several victims rights bills on the state level, but she is a relative newcomer to county politics.

Guldi is an attorney who was elected to the legislature two years ago and was the only Democrat given a committee chairmanship by the Republican Presiding Officer of the Legislature, Donald Blydenburgh. Guldi's "legal expertise and background," according to Blydenburgh, were helpful in dealing with issues pertaining to LILCO (Long Island Lighting Company) and county leases.

The editorial board felt that while it has had differences with Guldi in the past two years, Durham failed to make a sufficient case for her candidacy. She admitted that she has never attended a meeting of the county legislature. She did not support the elimination of the temporary sales tax increase because she did not believe sufficient cuts could be made in the budget to make up for the lost revenue. That opinion, unfortunately, was not based on involvement in the process or actual knowledge of county government.

Guldi often is well prepared and informed on issues, even if it is sometimes difficult to understand what he is saying since he usually speaks in very technical terms. We would hope in his second term he tones down his sometimes confrontational and partisan stances and keys in on the merits of the issues.

On balance, Guldi's knowledge of the issues and experience as a legislator give him the edge and our endorsement in this race.

## Suffolk County Legislature

3rd LD

### No endorsement

The race for the Third Legislative District seat features two non-incumbents seeking to replace veteran Legislator Herbert Davis, who is not seeking reelection. Suffolk Life's editorial board could not, for a variety of reasons, vote to endorse either candidate.

Michael Holtzman (D-I) is making his second attempt to win this seat. While his ambition to gain political office is commendable, his methods often leave something to be desired. Holtzman has made numerous, unsubstantiated, far-reaching allegations during the campaign. In his attack on his opponent, Fred Towle, Jr. (R-C-FP), he went far beyond standards for even a political campaign. Towle is a deputy county clerk and part of the allegations dealt with situations within the clerk's office.

Holtzman spent more time personally attacking his opponent than expressing his solutions to the problems that face the county. Our editorial board questioned if Holtzman possesses the qualifications, talents, ethics and morals needed to be a productive legislator.

Towle, on the other hand, lost the board's support with his answers on our county questionnaire, particularly those which pertain to finances and county expenditures. He put less of a priority on cutting the county work force, early retirement incentives and leaving positions vacant, imposing a strict hiring freeze, and favors the construction of a new county center rather than refurbishing the Dennison Building in Hauppauge. He also puts privatization far down on his list of priorities. These are important issues which could have a dramatic impact on county spending. The financial pitfalls demand new thinking on the part of our county legislators, doing things another way, with cost ever in mind. Towle, unfortunately, did not offer that hope.

Thus, Suffolk Life's editorial board chose to make no endorsement in this race, leaving the choice up to the voters, who hopefully will read carefully the candidates' views in our questionnaires.

4th L.D.

## Christopher Hahn (D)

Suffolk Life has chosen to endorse Christopher Hahn over Joseph Caracappa for his independence, support for creating a Suffolk County inspector general, fiscal conservatism and involvement in politics. Hahn has pledged to protect the voters, not a specific party.

Caracappa, on the other hand, has been quick to defend status quo Republicans and their involvement in the county car leasing scandal. He has also been a proponent of and is strongly supported by county employee unions, which, we fear, could result in an additional burden on the taxpayers in future labor negotiations.

Hahn has long been interested in politics—he managed a \$1.7 million budget as the president of student government at the State University of New York at Albany. Hahn has had legislative internship experience as well. Aside from his three months of experience in the legislature, Caracappa has less political experience. Although obviously bright, he has

not demonstrated leadership capabilities thus far. Caracappa did not actively participate in politics until his mother and former Fourth District Legislator Rose Caracappa passed away this summer.

Rose Caracappa was a registered Conservative but consistently voted as a big spending, liberal Democrat. Rarely did she oppose any spending bill, particularly labor contracts. She never could see the taxpayers' viewpoint. She always championed the viewpoints of organized labor and the police department.

The apple has not fallen far from the tree. Joseph Caracappa is following in his mother's footsteps and that definitely is not fiscally prudent or conservative.

In the view of the Suffolk Life editorial board, Hahn will be more independent of political and labor pressures and would better serve the residents of Suffolk County, and thus he receives our endorsement.

6th LD

## Martin W. Haley (R-C)

Martin Haley, a civic and political activist in the Sixth Legislative District, has wanted an opportunity to serve as legislator for several years, proudly stating he has created a resume by working for the community in preparation for this race.

Haley has a strong business background, specifically in real estate. He was an air traffic controller who opposed the strike but was terminated when former President Ronald Reagan fired the controllers who went on strike.

Haley has been an active member and past president of the Rocky Point Taxpayers and Civic Association. He has served for eight years on the Rocky Point school board as part of the conservative minority.

Haley favors cutting the sales tax by one-quarter percent during the next three years, stating he would like to see it done now but feels that county government could not withstand the impact in one year. Haley has the desire, and he wants to do the job for the right reasons.

Frank Locorriere, Haley's opponent, is the father of the current legislator, Michael Locorriere. He is treasurer of the Suffolk County Democratic Organization and has been a longtime party worker and steward of the Democrats. As his reward, Locorriere currently holds a \$110,000 patronage plum as vice-president of OTB. In total, he has been in county government for over 27 years, originally coming out of the county comptroller's office.

Locorriere favors slashing the sales tax by a full 1%, now, but offers no realistic plan on how to cover the budget gap that would be created. Instead, he falls back on attrition and other Band-aids as solutions to the shortfall. For somebody with a fiscal background, Locorriere's answers were surprisingly shallow.

OTB, which Locorriere duly controls with the Republican president, Howard DeMartini, is reportedly running in the red. To keep OTB going, county taxpayers may be asked to subsidize the operation.

OTB has traditionally been the dumping ground for political hacks. Most of the administrative positions are considered pork and patronage. We specifically asked Locorriere what he would recommend, as the vice-president of OTB, for weeding out the fat in this organization and making it profitable again. He danced around the question and, in our view showed a lack of courage to come up with the answers that are needed. You could not expect any better performance from him as a legislator. He would just become part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

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# County Legislature

## Martin W. Haley

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Locorriere further disturbed us when we asked him if he will resign from OTB if he is successful in his bid for the legislative seat. Locorriere said he would resign as vice-president. He made no further commitment to us.

OTB has a history of awarding consulting contracts to the highest paid officials when they leave. The value of these contracts coincidentally seems to be the difference between what they made at OTB and what they are making now in their new governmental position. This is political welfare, a blatant misuse of public trust and money.

Taxpayers and voters have a clear choice in this race. Suffolk Life endorses Martin Haley.

7th LD

## Donald Sallah (R-C-RTL)

Brian Foley is the current legislator in the Seventh Legislative District. He is the son of John Foley, who was the legislator from this district for a number of years up until his retirement two years ago.

Foley is arrogant and close-minded. He does excellent constituent work for those he feels will support him. He pointed with pride to the county purchase of the Park-Dodge facility on East Main Street in Patchogue. The Park-Dodge facility abuts Swan Lake and is adjacent to a park. Over \$600,000 of county taxpayer money will be spent for the acquisition. Several hundred thousand dollars more will have to be spent for demolition and the rebuilding of the land into a park-like setting.

We recently received a letter from the Swan Lake Civic Association protesting this acquisition. They charged that Foley had never contacted them, sought out their opinions or tried to work with them on their wants, needs and desires. They are the people who will be touched by the project initially. Was it Foley's arrogance, lack of common sense or damn-the-torpedoes attitude that caused him to ignore them?

In a more disturbing matter, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver recently denied the Village of Patchogue \$500,000 in road repair funding because the voters in that area elected a

## You Must Vote

# Beware of Proposition 3

Since this is a local election this year, many voters do not participate as they do in presidential and gubernatorial elections. In many ways, however, local elections are the most important of all.

On this year's ballot, voters will find a proposition which has frightening implications, and demands their vote. A Constitutional Amendment, it appears on the ballot as Proposition 3. This proposal will heavily impact the future size of government, spending and, most importantly, taxes.

The New York State Constitution requires state governments to gain voter approval before they can issue general obligation bonds and incur additional debt. Debt has become one of the biggest cost factors in government. Past governments have found a way around this constitutional requirement, using a method known as "back door" borrowing.

State officials need money for general purposes, but do not want to raise taxes directly. They know the voters will not look favorably on additional borrowing by the government. So the government in the past has used agencies such as the state's Urban Development Corporation (UDC) Agency and the Thruway Authority to borrow money without voter approval.

The scam works like this:

The state sells a prison, such as Attica, a state asset, to the UDC. The UDC gives the state the cash, which goes into the general fund. The state, in return, leases back the prison from the UDC. Voter approval is circumvented. The state gets a windfall of cash to squander and the UDC has rich opportunities to spend without governmental control.

This practice first started under Governor Nelson Rockefeller

Republican assemblywoman, replacing a Democratic incumbent. Foley was quoted as stating it was "unfortunate the cuts have to be shouldered so heavily by one small village." It is more than "unfortunate," it is virtually criminal Silver would use taxpayer dollars in such a way. Foley should have been fighting mad, putting together a coalition of Democratic elected officials and leaders, letting Silver know he can't get away with such an arrogant misuse of public funds. Weak responses to politically arrogant individuals like Silver get little results. The area needs a fighter who will put politics aside and fight for what is right.

Donald Sallah has been a longtime political and civic activist in the Farmingville/Holtsville area. He was a candidate for Congress back in the '70s. Sallah is active in the Lions Club and the fire department. He proposed ideas for eliminating fraud in welfare. As a matrimonial attorney, he has firsthand knowledge of problems within the system and the proposals needed to correct them.

Sallah has innovative ideas for utilizing the lace mill in Patchogue. This facility has been an eyesore and a magnet for the homeless. We don't know whether his ideas will fly but, by demonstrating new thoughts and proposals, he earned the editorial board's respect.

Suffolk Life endorses Donald Sallah.

## Legislative recap...

from page 2

and streamline government.

**10th LD**--Thomas Finlay (R-C) has a proven record as a tax fighter and has fought to make the county friendly for businesses.

**11th LD**--We have seen improvement in Angie Carpenter's (R-C) performance. She has worked hard in areas of economic development and mandate relief.

**12th L.D.**--Donald Blydenburgh (R-C) has provided strong leadership as presiding officer of the legislature and has a strong record of accomplishment.

**13th L.D.**--Michael D'Andre (R-C) has shown a bit more fire in this race and has displayed more knowledge of the issues than he has in the past.

**14th L.D.**--David Bishop (D) has been an innovative legislator, coming up with legislation that is designed to improve government and cut its costs.

**15th L.D.**--Republican-Conservative Rachel Davis is both a strong candidate and a member of the minority this district was designed to serve. She would be an effective legislator.

**16th L.D.**--Allan Binder (R-C) earned our nod based on his experience in the job, but our support is not enthusiastically given.

**17th L.D.**--Paul Tonna, (R-C) although we have not agreed with him on several occasions in the past, has earned the right for a new term.

**18th L.D.**--Stephen Hackeling (R-C) is the easy choice in this contest. He has targeted costs and works for the people.

feller when he avoided going to the public for approval to build the State Plaza in Albany. Governor Mario Cuomo used it as a one-shot cash windfall by selling and leasing back Attica Prison, and had the Thruway Authority pull a similar deal when they sold the Thruway and leased it back. As a result of these deals, only \$5.2 billion of the state's debt is voter approved. The total state debt this spring was almost \$28 billion.

Proposition 3 is supposed to correct this condition but has more loopholes in it that any scoundrel can use to avoid taxpayer approval for bonding. It calls for non-voter approval, general obligation debt and bonding that would not require voter approval, called revenue bonds. It increases the amount the government may bond to \$36 billion. This is on top of the \$22 billion worth of bonding that has been done through the back door.

New York State already has one of the highest ratios in the nation of debt caused by "back door" borrowing. Most of the recent bond issues that have been put to the voters have been turned down.

You should contact your state legislators, find out how they stand on "Proposition 3." If they favor it, they favor increasing your taxes. If they don't favor it, tell them to get off their duffs and introduce a plain and simple bill that stops "back door borrowing".

Although there is a court challenge to this proposal, it appears on the sample ballots and may be on the ballot election day. Look for it. Vote no on Proposition 3. Let's take the ability to employ this scam from scheming politicians.

And why not?

# County Briefs

## Gun issue debated

Riverhead School Board President Kenneth Zahler and Board Member Allen Smith went another round at last Tuesday's board meeting concerning the tolerance of firearms in the district. A resolution was passed at the September 26 board meeting which stated that a student would be expelled if he/she were found in school with a gun. At Tuesday's meeting, however, Zahler declared the resolution "null and invalid" because it violated board policy.

Zahler said board members should have never voted on the resolution at the meeting because, according to Zahler, board policy requires a vote to be taken only after the precise language of a resolution is determined. Zahler maintains that this was not the case with the resolution at hand because a vote was taken immediately after the resolution was proposed by Smith.

Smith, who has been trying to send a message to the community that guns are not going to be tolerated in schools, challenged Zahler at the meeting, saying he had no right to declare the resolution null. "You have no right to do that. I told board members I was going to propose the resolution at that board meeting. This is not a dictatorship," said Smith. Smith went on to say that he would propose to amend the resolution even further adding that assault on teachers or other personnel and possession of narcotics is reason for expulsion as well. "Let's not just stop at guns," Smith said.

## School bond fails

Port Jefferson residents voted down the school district's \$10.6 million bond issue by a narrow margin on Oct. 24.

The bond issue failed with 52% of the people against it. According to Port Jefferson Schools Business Administrator Al Neuner, 1,149 people turned out to vote, with 599 voting no and 550 voting yes. The bond would have paid for massive repair and remodeling of the school facilities, along with building a new gym/multi-purpose room for middle school students. The middle school students currently share some facilities with the high school students.

Board of Education President James Winkler said the board would take heed. "My personal reaction to it is generally I have a lot of confidence in the wisdom of the voters in the school district. They usually do the right thing."

Winkler said the board was calling a special meeting for October 30 to review exit polls from the vote.

"At this point, we really need to know why if the public disagreed with the proposal; whether it was the way we were spending the money or whether it was too much money," Winkler said.

Port Jefferson Schools Superintendent Wayne Jones had said the district would need to spend \$3.5 million next year just to keep the buildings up to safety codes.

## Block scheduling OK'd

The Kings Park School Board unanimously approved the implementation of block scheduling at the high school for the 1996-1997 school year at its October 24 meeting.

School administrators believe the program is the first of its kind on Long Island.

Block scheduling calls for four 80-minute class periods one day and three periods the next day, as opposed to the traditional eight 42-minute sessions. In addition, students can take advantage of an 80-minute "seminar" block on alternate days during which they can make appointments with staff members for extra help, do independent research or study in the library or computer center.

Dr. Mary DeRose, superintendent of schools, said students will be better prepared for the type of schedules they will face in a college setting under the new plan, which was the brainchild of High School Principal John Merone.

The restructuring, which was slated for this fall, was delayed to better prepare staff for the transition.

## Generators go out for re-bid

After further examination of an award which would have provided Atlantic Detroit Diesel Allison, a Ronkonkoma firm, \$145,800 to inspect, repair, relocate, and provide training for the operation of two EMD12-645E4 diesel generators, the Village of Greenport has decided to put the project out for bid once again.

The Greenport Board of Trustees revoked the contract after a meeting with officials from MKW Power Systems, Inc., a Rocky Mount, North Carolina firm which was one of Atlantic Detroit Diesel Allison's competitors during the August 29 bidding process.

MKW Vice-President Thomas L. Easterday had previously implied that village officials had adjusted the company's bid, making Atlantic Detroit Diesel Allison's proposal more attractive.



**GHOULISH GUARDIAN**--A witch guards Krupski's farmstand in Cutchogue as North Fork residents, not to mention the occasional out-of-towner, search for the perfect Halloween pumpkin. Photo by Steven P. Henneke. (NF C156F)

## For Southold Town

# Fire marshal picked

By Steven P. Henneke

According to Southold Town Supervisor Thomas H. Wickham, the 1996 preliminary budget, which the board adopted by a vote of four to two on October 27, includes a provision for a fire marshal.

"The board has proposed staffing this position with the half-time services of Gary Fish, a building inspector," explained Wickham in a letter written to Southold Fire Department First Assistant Chief Edward J. Boyd last Friday. "We are proposing a promotion for Mr. Fish to a title appropriate to these duties, to be worked out in consultation with Civil Service and CSEA (Civil Service Employees Association). The fire marshal duties would be exercised out of the building department, the department currently housing Mr. Fish, and in many ways the most appropriate one for fire safety..."

"The new fire marshal's responsibilities are in addition to those of Mr. Robert Fisher, whose funding is continued in 1996 to conduct fire inspections of buildings with public assembly," added the supervisor. "I believe that the work of these two men will be highly complementary and will gain from a close association with the other inspections carried out by the building department."

ment."

"I'm not sure if the designation of 'fire marshal' is quite accurate," Fish said. "We'll have to check with Civil Service as far as the title is concerned. Basically, the position is for someone to do fire inspections in the town."

Fish explained that he "has no problem at all" with the prospect of fulfilling the duties of the new position, assuming all elements of the 1996 budget are indeed ratified. Adding that, in his estimation, a prospective fire marshal fits ideally within the mandates of the building department, Fish said, "We enforce the New York State building code, so we're very much involved with fire safety. This is simply giving us a more proactive role in enforcing codes through zoning. Basically, we (members of the Southold Town Building Department) are fire inspectors anyway, because we enforce these regulations. This (the new position) is designating a person to specifically take care of the duty of enforcement in a proactive way."

As far as the budget itself is concerned, the board will conduct public hearings on the proposal at 3 and 7 p.m. on November 9. Passage of the final budget, should it be adopted, will take place on the same day following the completion of the hearings.

## For S'hold supervisor

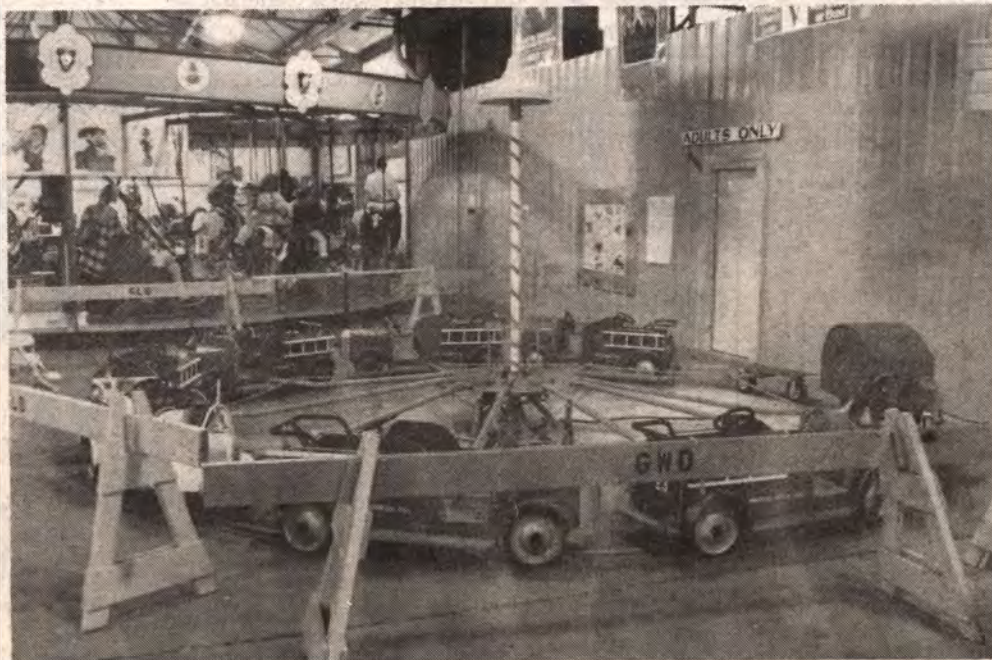
# Campaign is ending

By Steven P. Henneke

After more than three months of debate and accusation, the race for the position of Southold Town supervisor will come to a conclusion next Tuesday, with either incumbent Thomas H. Wickham (US, D) being re-elected to his second term, or Republican, Conservative, and Freedom Party challenger Jean W. Cochran ousting him, thus becoming the first female town executive.

Wickham obtained his bachelor's and master's degrees, both in agricultural engineering, from Cornell University in 1962 and 1967, respectively. In 1971, he received a doctorate in the field of soils and water engineering from the aforementioned university. During his tenure at Cornell, the supervisor was a volunteer and team leader for International Volunteer Services, Inc. in Cambodia and Vietnam, accounting for his knowledge of

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**NEW ADDITION**--Greenport's newly-acquired fire truck kiddie ride, one of two such attractions recently donated by Northrop-Grumman, awaits patrons at the Barstow Shipyard. The village's carousel, which was handed over by the defense contractor earlier this year, can be seen in the background. Photo by Steven P. Henneke. (NF C157F)

## Shelter Island Supervisor

# Huson Sherman (D,IA)

While the editorial board had some difficulty making its decision to endorse Arthur "Bud" Fox (D,IA) and Harold E. McGee (R,C) for the Shelter Island Town Board, the decision to back incumbent Supervisor Huson "Hoot" Sherman (D,IA) was an easy chore.

Sherman has done a magnificent job over the years as town supervisor. He has worked diligently to develop a comprehensive plan, address the town's environmental concerns, and implement policies for affordable housing.

Sherman has also been invaluable in the local effort to determine the cause for the brown tide which now plagues our estuaries and waterways. In conjunction with the four other East End town supervisors, primarily Southold Town Supervisor Thomas H. Wickham, Sherman has made a concerted effort to eradicate the algae from the waters surrounding Shelter Island.

And while Sherman's opponent, Frank R. Beckwith (R,C), is a kind, honest man with the town's best interests in mind, he seems to have little understanding of the

key issues which face Shelter Island. Based upon his statements at a debate held by Suffolk Life, it would seem that Beckwith is primarily concerned with minor zoning issues which, in all honesty, are not a high priority for the town. The comprehensive plan being developed by the Sherman Administration will no doubt address zoning issues on a long-term basis.

Suffolk Life's editorial board unanimously endorses Sherman.

**YOUR VOTE COUNTS!**



On Nov. 7th YOU Can Make A Difference

## Shelter Island Town Board

# Arthur Fox (D,IA), Harold McGee (R,C)

In the race for the Shelter Island Town Board, the decision to endorse two of the three candidates was not an easy one to make. Arthur "Bud" Fox (D,IA), Harold E. McGee (R,C) and Paul E. Mobius, Jr. (R,C) all have the character and qualifications to serve the island well. In fact, a vote for any of these three men would constitute an excellent decision.

The candidates have the ability to place politics aside and work with leaders from other parties to do what is best for the town. They support affordable housing, a coherent comprehensive plan, and the preservation of Shelter Island's environment and unique character.

Suffolk Life's editorial board, however,

feels that Fox and McGee have the edge. Fox will bring a fresh perspective to the board, as well as a desire to maintain the town's present position on tourism. McGee, on the other hand, is an incumbent who has vast experience on the board. As chairman of the Waterways Committee, McGee has overseen the transfer and placement of 203 moorings; he has also worked extensively to construct or repair bulkheads and docks for the purpose of preserving the island's shoreline and beaches.

The voters of Shelter Island cannot go wrong with any of the three candidates. Yet, Suffolk Life feels that Fox and McGee have that "little extra," thus they have our endorsement.

## For 1st LD

# Campaign nears end

By Steven P. Henneke

In less than one week, the relatively placid First Legislative District race between Michael J. Caracciolo (R,C) and James McManmon (D) will come to a conclusion, as voters choose one of the men to replace Legislator Gregory J. Blass (R-Aquebogue), who is running for the position of Suffolk County Family Court judge.

Caracciolo, a graduate of both Nassau Community College and Adelphi University with a bachelor's degree in management, is a retired officer of the United States Marine Corps and a 20-year veteran of the Nassau County Police Department.

The Republican nominee, who is now in the printing business, ran against Blass for the First District seat in 1989, ousting the 10-year incumbent and winning the position on Suffolk County's governing body, where he served as chairman of the public works and the energy, environment and economic development committee.

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# Tarnished Silver, arrogant action

In our decades of covering governmental affairs, we have never seen the kind of arrogant, politically-motivated and morally corrupt action that came down from Albany recently to the Village of Patchogue. With the image of politicians becoming more and more tarnished, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver has, in our view, delivered the death blow to the thought that integrity still existed in the political spectrum.

Silver delivered this shattering blow to the political image with his recent decision to cut road repair funding for three specific areas of the state. Their crime, it turns out, is the voters in these three areas ousted Democratic Assembly incumbents and elected Republican representatives. In our area, Patchogue Village has been denied \$500,000 for roadway work because of the defeat of former Assemblyman William Bianchi by Assemblywoman Debra Mazzairelli.

Silver's action boggles the mind. With the power he holds as the Assembly speaker, he denies funding—taxpayer dollars—because of the results of an election? Because the people of an area chose to elect someone other than his personal choice? He sits on his Albany throne and says to the people in Patchogue Village, "you had the audacity to use your right of choice at the ballot box to vote for someone I have not ordained? Off with your funds, I will show you that you cannot trifle with my desires!"

Late last week came word that Silver's cuts have been postponed. According to both Mazzairelli and State Senator Caesar Trunzo (R-Brentwood),

who have been actively fighting Silver's arrogant edict, work in progress will be paid for. According to Trunzo, "The village is well" along in the process. If they continue to move forward with construction, these projects should be safe from Speaker Silver's political bullying."

The "postponement" does not resolve the problem, however. Such an abuse of power cannot be condoned. One would think that such an arrogant action would bring an outpouring of outrage from the ranks of the elected state officials—including the Democrats who helped to put Silver into the position he is now abusing. Assemblymen Paul Harenberg, Bob Sweeney, Steven Engelbright, what have you to say? Do you believe your elected leader should have the right to use taxpayer dollars to punish an area that ousted a Democrat in a legal election process? William Bianchi, is the sting of defeat so great that you would not speak out against such arrogant action? If any of you have, we surely haven't heard it.

Where are the cries of protest from Suffolk County Democratic Leader Dominic Baranello, and State Democratic Chairman Judith Hope, herself a Long Islander and former supervisor from the Town of East Hampton? And where are the demands from the rank and file Democrats from the Village of Patchogue—a predominantly Democratic area?

Silver's brand of thinking hurts everyone from all political persuasions, not just the Republicans who cast their ballots for Mazzairelli. It is an act so arrogant, so lacking in integrity that it

cannot be allowed to go unanswered. No political leader, anywhere, should be permitted to dole out taxpayer dollars to satisfy his political desires, or to punitively deny taxpayer dollars to those who dare to defy his desires. What is next? Will he move to deny funds to the school districts where his precious candidates are defeated? Will we next see state dollars allocated according to the number of Democratic votes cast?

Democrats, Republicans, members

of all political persuasions everywhere, fire off a letter to Silver demanding he retract his edict. Let him know, pure and simple, you are opposed to his arrogant kind of leadership. The address is Sheldon Silver, Speaker of the Assembly, Room 932 LOB, Albany, NY 12248. His telephone number is 518-455-3791.

If you believe that government is to serve, not punish the people, you have an obligation to speak out against such an arrogant abuse of power. And why not?



# The Group, a mission of caring

With Election Day now behind us, the next important date on the horizon is that of Thanksgiving Day, a time to offer thanks for the many blessings we enjoy in our lives. It is an unfortunate fact of life, however, that there will be some who will have little to be thankful for this year. Because of no fault of their own, the loss of a job, a sickness or accident, or other serious problem, there will be little to look forward to.

This is a particularly hard time of year for those who face these conditions and have small children in their families. Shortly after Thanksgiving comes Christmas, a magical time of year for the little ones. The stores and television ads will be chock-full of toys and other goodies that youngsters yearn for. They will have a list of wants despite the financial obstacles their parents face. They will dream of Santa Claus and presents under the tree on Christmas morning. And the hearts of some parents will be broken and tears will come because they will not be able to fulfill—as they have done in previous years—the wishes of their children.

But because of the goodness that lives in the hearts of others, those who participate in the activities of "The Group," many of these dreams will come true. The heavy hearts of some parents will be lifted, screams of delight will be heard coming from happy children, all because of the generosity of those who join together to bring happiness to those less fortunate.

The Group had its beginning a number of years ago during a weekend holiday for a group of friends. One told of being able to reach out to a family which had lost the father. Things were bleak, finances were slim. But the person relating the story reached out, provided some food, and a few small gifts for the children. The look of appreciation in the eyes of the mother is a vision this friend would never forget. The friends, counting their own blessings, decided to reach out themselves and help others less fortunate than they.

Not long after, this group of friends learned about a family that was desperately in need. There would be no Christmas, no gifts under the tree, not even a holiday meal, things were that bad. The friends pooled their resources. They found out what the family really needed, and the Christmas wishes of the children. They shopped for the family as if they were their own family members. They wrapped the gifts and, on Christmas Eve, knocked on the door of the family's house. "We're the Group," said one, "and we want to help you have a happy holiday, to let you know you are not alone, that people care."

The mother was in shock. She didn't know these people, and they didn't know her. But they cared. As she opened the door, they walked into the living room where the mother had put up a sparsely decorated tree. It was her feeble attempt to give her children

some Christmas enjoyment, even if there would be no presents under the tree. There soon were, a pile so large it almost overwhelmed the room and the small tree.

"Merry Christmas," said The Group as they prepared to leave. The look of appreciation, the love that they saw in the mother's tearful eyes is something they will never forget, giving them a warm feeling inside that enhanced their own lives.

The Group has grown since then. Through the years, more and more families come to their attention. People have responded to requests for help in order to bring happiness into more and more lives. Last year, with the blessings of donations from many, many caring people, The Group helped spread joy into the lives of more than 60 families, and more than 200 children.

Everyone involved in The Group is a volunteer. Not one cent of the donations received go for salaries or administrative costs. A very generous retailer gives the group wrapping paper, boxes, bows, so that the funds collected can be used for more gifts, for more families and children. The volunteer shoppers buy specific items of need or want for individual children, often dipping further into their own pockets just to buy that "one more gift." It's an infectious, gratifying effort.

There are no names involved in the group activities. The families in need are listed by alphabet letter only: Fam-

ily A, Family B. Only the first names of the children are listed and known, except to those who maintain the master lists. The needs of each family are verified, the correct sizes are learned, some special toys or gifts wanted are determined. Shoppers are given a list for each child, with sizes and needs. The gifts are brought to the Community Room of Suffolk Life where they are stored in special containers for each family. Many wonderful people have made this effort possible with their financial donations. Retailers have offered discounts; wholesalers have participated. Our shoppers look for the best bargains. All of this helps our limited dollars go further to help those in need.

The Group's efforts have grown only because of the generosity of thousands of Suffolk residents. If you would like to become part of The Group, contributions are vitally needed to continue this mission of caring. Donations should be sent to The Group, PO Box 167, Riverhead, NY 11901. If you know of a family in need which can be verified, please let us know. If you would like to volunteer in some way, your help is appreciated.

All we can promise in return is a warmth in your heart on Christmas, envisioning the joy you have helped bring to others. Won't you join us?

And why not?

# Justice was not done

The case of Douglas Cooper has come to a conclusion as far as the legal system is concerned.

Cooper, a Mattituck farmer, had his farmstand robbed repeatedly over a two-year period. Southold Town police never brought anyone to justice, nor were they able to stop the repeated violations.

Cooper, being a down-east type of person, decided it was his responsibility to protect his own property. With shotgun in hand, he staked out a farmstand and caught a person in the act of robbing it. He apprehended the perpetrator and tied him up.

Shortly thereafter, a car pulled up and stopped. It was the car that had earlier dropped off the perpetrator. Cooper hollered at the driver to halt and, he states, the occupants responded by trying to get away. Not only did they try to get away, they

put Cooper in fear for his life as the car was aimed at the place he was standing.

Cooper raised his gun and fired from just a few feet away. Cooper was using number six birdshot. When shot from close range, the pattern holds together and has the impact of a bullet from a rifle. When shot from a distance, the pattern has a tendency to scatter and cover a wide range of area. The birdshot hit the bumper and bent it. It cut a small piece out of the headlight right above the bumper. This would indicate to anyone who knows anything about guns, particularly shotguns, that the range was very close. Unquestionably, in our view, Cooper was defending his own life.

The second shot Cooper fired was almost directly at the fender of the car from a slightly elevated position,

directly toward the top of a rear tire. The hole in the fender showed that the gun was fired at an extremely close range, probably no more than two to four feet. This was how close the car was to making Cooper the victim of a homicide.

The police claim that the second shot was a use of excessive force. The angle of the shot obviously was downward, indicating that Cooper had no intention of harming anyone and was only defending his life and attempting to stop his tormentors.

When Suffolk Life reported on the story, we editorially asked readers to write to the district attorney, registering support for Cooper's right to defend himself and his property. Suffolk Life has learned the DA received over 500 letters from outraged citizens. Only the Katie Beers case generated more comment to the DA.

The Southold Town Police arrested Cooper and charged him with a felony. The DA could have dropped the charges entirely but, instead, offered Cooper an ACOD (Adjournment in Contemplation of Dismissal) on a charge of prohibited firing of a weapon, a Class A misdemeanor. On the advice of an attorney, Cooper accepted this offer. He had spent 22 hours in jail, and had come to lose trust in the system.

Cooper's life has been turned upside-down. The perpetrator he caught is walking free today. The accomplices who were in the car were never charged. Cooper will have a record for six months, and if he is involved in no further problems, the record will disappear. The perpetrators do not have a record and have never even had to apologize.

We live in a sick society. The DA and the police chief fear good, honest citizens protecting themselves more than they fear the criminal element which is free to abuse us. Both have personally said to me that they do not believe that citizens should arm themselves. Both used the term "vigilantes." Both have acknowledged that the police are incapable of stopping crime or creating an atmosphere where people do not have to fear for their property or their lives. In fact, there is nothing in the law that requires police to ensure the safety of the public.

What this country needs is more Doug Coopers, not less—people who stand up and are willing to say, "If my government can't protect me, I will protect myself." It is our responsibility to live free and ensure that no one violates our life or our property.

Justice was not served in this case—the perpetrators were, and that is just wrong.

And why not?

## New law offers help

# Homeless housing control

Last year we served on a task force on homeless housing. In the course of that activity, Suffolk County Commissioner of Social Services John Wingate explained to task force members what his department could do and what it could not do in regards to housing matters.

We were amazed to find out that the county could not remove vandals, lawbreakers or troublemakers from emergency housing. It didn't make any difference if these socially unacceptable people dealt drugs, kicked in walls or tore out appliances. The

county could not remove them. In fact, these people could demand to be put in different quarters after they had ruined what had been given to them.

Governor Pataki has signed an emergency measure revising this situation. Social Services commissioners and their departments now can remove people from housing for violating common sense rules and regulations that pertain to health and safety. We, as a society, no longer have to tolerate and provide housing for those who refuse to live by the

rules. This is good news for all, and particularly for those who are forced into emergency housing and must live with these lawbreakers.

Local officials should use these laws to weed out those people who, while occupying emergency housing, are not living by the standards set by the community. Under the old rules, a number of emergency housing facilities had become drug houses and there was nothing that Social Services could do about it. Now they can, and they should act expeditiously.

And why not?

## Shame on us

# 'I don't really give a damn.'

More than half the candidates who sought election in the November 7 balloting were defeated. We personally would like to thank those candidates for all their efforts, their devotion to the system of democracy, and the incredible amount of hours and pressure they subjected themselves to.

Their defeats may have been caused by their own lack of preparation or being outgunned or outspent by their opponents. But, we suspect, many of them went down in defeat because we did not vote.

Of the 100% of those eligible to vote, only around 60% were registered and could legally vote. Out of those registered, only 36% took the time out to go to the polls. Only one out of every third citizen exercised his or her right to determine what their government would be like and

who would be our administrators. This is a shame.

We have one of the best governmental systems in the world. It is based upon our ability to personally take part in the process. It gives us the opportunity of throwing the bums out and putting new people into office. It gives us an opportunity to say "enough is enough" when we are being taxed more than we can afford. It

gives us the opportunity to put into office people who think the way we do, and yet we are too damn lazy to find out about the candidates and get up off our couch and go to the polls.

We have made voting as easy as it can be. There are numerous ways to register and now with the motor voter laws, we can even register when we renew our licenses. Polls are

opened from 6 a.m. until 9 p.m. This gives almost everyone a time frame to vote.

How disheartening it must be to be a candidate, to devote four to six months of your life presenting yourself to the public and having the public yawn in your face and, by not voting, say, "I don't give a damn."

Don't we realize how easy it is for special interests to gain control of our government by turning out to vote, and we don't? We get the government we deserve and two-thirds of the people who could have voted have lost their right to complain about it.

Yes, local elections do not bring about the turnout national elections do, but they are the most important elections, for it is the selection of office holders closest to us, our town and county governments. We are saddened that so many people gave up their franchise.

And why not?

*"Out of those registered, only 36% took the time out to go to the polls. Only one out of every third citizen exercised his or her right to determine what their government would be like ..."*

# The same as the family finances

Recently, a reader asked me to explain what was going on in Washington DC. I attempted to explain it this way: You can substitute he for she or Democrat for Republican.

The family members, each year, sit down and try to calculate their expenditures for the next 12 months. They develop a budget and make a resolution to stay within it. The budget is based upon the known expenditures and the known income. It is tight living on a budget. No one likes it, but it is the only sane way to manage your finances.

During the following months, the wife complains to the husband that she can't make ends meet on the budget. He takes a second job, and this unexpected income makes it easier to get by. The only problem is that the wife has a tendency to be a spendthrift and because the husband is working two jobs, he is not there to put the brakes on her unexpected spending.

The following year, when they sit down to do the budget, they calculate in the regular salary and the income from his second job. About mid-year, she is

spending more than they are making. She discovers that little piece of plastic that has been in the back of her wallet gathering dust. She starts charging on the card and extending the payments over time.

The husband does not discover the charging until the end of the year when they are getting ready to do the next year's budget. He says, "Give me the card. We can't afford the extravagance." She says, "I can't afford to live on your income. You have a stalemate just like you have in Washington."

The husband outlines a plan for the next seven years that requires them to cut out a lot of items in the budget that they have come to accept as necessities. It is going to be tight going, but they can make it if they act prudently. The wife says she can't live this way. It is not the style of living that she has become accustomed to.

For years, a budget has been passed in Washington that is a blueprint for running the government. Mid-year, the government spends more than it is taking in. Rather than to conform to the

budget and cut back on expenditures, they simply issue IOUs through the Treasury and have them print more money. This additional spending over and above what has been appropriated becomes part of the national debt.

The IOUs that the administration writes to the Treasury are not interest-free, and as a result, 20% of every dollar we pay in taxes is going to pay interest that the government owes.

The new breed of politician who went to Washington a year ago last January pledged to balance the budget within seven years. They want to eliminate the interest payments so that the average American can see a reduction in the taxes that they are assessed.

Contrary to what you see on television and read in some of the liberal media, Congress has not taken an axe to Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security or many other programs the government is involved in. They have merely attempted to control the growth of these programs over the next seven years. They are trying to bring them into the rate of inflation so that they can be

funded out of our taxes, rather than borrowing to pay for them now, depending upon the children of tomorrow to pay for them.

Congress' original plan called for asking Medicare beneficiaries to contribute \$7 a month more toward their premiums. Medicare beneficiaries currently pay around \$45 per month for their medical policy. The \$7 increase would take that to around \$52. In comparison, the cost of a medical policy for those of us who are working is approximately \$170 to \$250 per month for medical coverage for an individual. Family plans run from \$400 to \$700 per month. Some of us are fortunate enough to have our employer contribute to the plan. Many of us are forced to buy the plan on our own.

Seniors are able to buy their coverage through Medicare at less than 25 cents on the dollar. Seniors are the biggest users of medical services. It's only fair that those who can contribute more to their own costs, do so.

Congress is attempting to bring runaway governmental inflation under control. It is the first real effort that has been made during this editor's lifetime. Every dirty trick that can be portrayed has been used to pit American against American in the current battle over the budget. No one is cutting out Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security or the other social programs. All that Congress is trying to do is to bring sanity to our country's finances.

Congress is like the husband in the above example. Reasonableness must be shown on all sides. This country can't go on as it has for the last several decades. We may be rich in natural resources and have a tremendous workforce, but even as IBM learned, there are straws that break your back.

Congress needs our support. The President will need our support when he shows a willingness to really balance the budget rather than talk about it. The members of Congress are trying to do their job; the President must work with them.

And why not?

Thanksgiving 1995

## Half full, half empty

This Thanksgiving when we sit around the table with our family and friends, let's try to be positive. Our glass is neither full, nor is it empty.

During the mid- and late-'80s, almost everyone had a glass that was full. Life was sweet. The economy was booming. Raises were frequent. Profits were unusually high. Inflation was under control, and deflation had not set in. Everyone who wanted to be happy, was happy.

Prior to this period of time, our country had been racked with inflation that was impossible to keep up with.

The period we are living in now is an economy racked with disinflation. Large companies have downsized. Profit margins have been narrowed. It's been more important to have the security of a job than to receive a raise.

Yet, through all of this, most of us are in relatively good shape. There is food on our table. Our families are together. We can expend our energies complaining that things aren't what they were during the '80s, or we can look at the other periods of our life when times were much tougher.

Each of us should count all the blessings

that we enjoy, but that we all too often have a tendency to take for granted. Life and how it affects you often is a reflection upon how you look at it and what you make of it. You are a lot happier if you look at the glass being half full rather than being half empty.

We encourage all, before they start their dinner Thanksgiving Day, to reflect upon the good times that they have and thank God for his generosity.

And we thank you, our valued readers, for your continued support and wish you a happy and safe holiday.

And why not?

## So much to do, so little time

Here we are on the eve of Thanksgiving. The Group's efforts to provide Christmas are about to begin. The Group provides Christmas for children whose parents normally are able to, but because of an accident, an illness or some unforeseen circumstance, cannot this year.

For the last several weeks, as the merchandising to children has increased in frequency, the wee ones have been telling Mom and Dad what they want for Christmas. Unfortunately, many of these parents have been forced to tell their children that Santa won't be coming to their house. The little ones don't understand. They have been good; they have said their prayers and they believe that Santa goes to everyone's home.

For 17 years, we have been involved with a gathering of people who go under the title of The Group. We are just ev-

eryday citizens who are thankful for the blessings that we have received. We pool our resources and provide Christmas for those who don't expect it.

Residents of Suffolk County contact us and let us know of families in need that meet our criteria. The families normally are able to provide holiday items for their youngsters but will not be able to do so this year through no fault of their own. We step in and do the job.

The recipients never know us individually. Those that participate in The Group's efforts, outside of those responsible for qualifying those who will be helped, never know the names of the people they are helping. Families are identified by letters, children by their first names only. Most of the needs and wants of the children are taken care of. We concentrate first on clothing the children, from socks through outerwear

if needed. We then buy a few gifts the child may want and will truly enjoy.

Every child is shopped for individually by a volunteer. Some items are bought in bulk and the shoppers select from the availability of supplies. Every item is individually gift wrapped and labeled with the child's name.

A day or two before Christmas, the items are delivered to the parents who, in some cases, do not know that we are coming. The parents are given the opportunity to give the children the presents from themselves or from Santa. We also give each family a gift certificate for food so that they may have not only material gifts, but food and substance as well.

The entire program operates without anyone receiving credit. We use our own funds which we have pooled together,

and then donations from contributors. In this way, we are able to reach multiple families. Last year, we provided Christmas for over 200 children. Many of our financial contributors have also become workers helping with the shopping, wrapping and the delivering.

There are so many out there that are not as fortunate as us. They need our help, and we are glad to give it. We operate under a very simple principle: "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

If you can help, we would sincerely appreciate your donations. If you know of someone who meets our criteria, please let us know, and if we have resources available, we will try to help them.

There is so little time, so much to do. You may contact The Group at PO Box 167, Riverhead, NY 11901.

And why not?



# Firecrats burn taxpayers

While the volunteer firefighters of Long Island are still basking in the glow of appreciation and praise heaped upon them for their heroic efforts battling wildfires here in Suffolk County this past summer, the same cannot be said for the officials of one fire district who were the targets of a scathing audit report by the office of the New York State Comptroller.

Members of the Board of Fire Commissioners in the Lakeland Fire District in the Town of Islip were cited, in part, for a lack of accountability for conference expenses; a 30% cost overrun in the construction of an addition to the main firehouse; and the cre-

ation of two non-residential tax zones for the specific purpose of levying additional property taxes to finance special firefighting equipment, but not detailing the equipment needed or having any record of using these additional taxes for the purchase of such equipment. The board was also criticized for the expenditure of district funds for goods and services in excess of \$400,000 without advertising for competitive bids as required by law. The comptroller's audit also detailed a host of other questionable actions by the board of commissioners in dealing with the financial affairs of the district.

"Finally," the report said, "we

must point out that the commissioners' extravagance in purchasing furnishings, primarily for their own use, is unmatched in our experience. We noted purchases such as a conference table costing \$7,200, four chairs costing a total of \$5,900, eleven bar stools costing \$450 each, and the installation of marble in their bathroom and kitchenette costing \$11,750."

The 71-page report, which contained 33 findings, specifically noted that in 1994, the district paid approximately \$46,600 to send the commissioners, the district manager and certain fire department officers to two conventions, with little or no accountability for these costs. District taxpayers supported the costs of a four-day International Association of Fire Chiefs Conference in Anaheim, California in September of 1992. The audit report states: "There was no accounting, supporting bills, or description of costs incurred to account for cash advances totaling \$7,650. Nothing."

The report also questioned an expenditure of \$420 for jackets for 10 officers and a credit card charge of \$456 "for which there was absolutely no explanation." The auditors also questioned costs "which appear excessive and beyond what would be necessary and allowable costs for conference attendance."

"For example," the report states, "one commissioner rented a six-passenger stretch limousine to travel to and from the airport in New York City, several commissioners rented luxury vehicles in California, and one commissioner incurred additional charges of \$331 to upgrade his room."

There's more—much more. The audit report details a myriad of ways in which fire district officials were negligent in managing the affairs of the district, in addition to squandering, without documentation, fire district funds—provided by taxpayers—as if they were their own personal funds. If but one-half of the criticisms cited are true, the entire bunch of those who

were involved in these instances should be publicly named, publicly held accountable, and be forced to face the taxpayer at a public hearing detailing their actions.

Several years ago, state audit reports criticizing boards of fire commissioners for similar actions caused a wave of angry reaction. Vows that such actions would be eliminated flowed freely. Some changes were made; some fire commissioners left office soon after. In fact, according to the recently released audit report, several of the findings were contained in the audit report of 1988. "Four of the five commissioners who held office in 1987 were also in office during 1994, the primary period covered by this report. The failure of the commissioners to take corrective action regarding these conditions shows a continuing disregard for legal requirements and the proper management and stewardship of taxpayer funds."

The current board of fire commissioners consists of the following members: Chairman John Bohne, Tony Pitka, John Lombardo, Stuart Morris and Robert Galione. It should be noted that Galione took office after the period that was covered in the audit. In addition, he was the only commissioner to meet with the auditors to discuss the situation. The others, according to the report, "declined to attend, and the attorney for the fire district informed us that the commissioners waived their rights to an exit conference."

The audit report states: "Our report is critical of certain of the financial management practices of these individuals but should not be interpreted as criticism of the hard-working and professional volunteer firemen and emergency medical technicians of the Lakeland Fire District."

It is time, through legislative or legal measures, to be able to swiftly oust from office those who are guilty of such actions. They bring shame to the fire service which has finally, belatedly, received just recognition.

And why not?

## The sales tax caper

# Fraud begets fraud

Some years ago, Suffolk voters were sold a fraud. They were asked by referendum to increase the sales tax by 1/4%. The alleged purpose of this 1/4% sales tax was water preservation.

We argued at the time that this was not the intended purpose of the sales tax increase, that it was nothing more than a budget gimmick being used to balance the budget. We were right. While the public believed that in passing this sales tax increase the money would be used primarily for the acquisition of water-sensitive lands, the actual wording in the bill, which the public never saw, actually spread out the potential allocation of the money to cover a multitude of uses and indebtedness the county and local municipalities would incur to meet state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) regulations and other environmental needs. If you attached a water label to it, it became eligible for funding through the increased sales tax receipts.

The entire presentation of the sales tax increase was done fraudulently. It should come as no surprise to anyone that the Suffolk County Legislature and the Gaffney administration have used this 1/4% sales tax, that was supposed to be dedicated to water, to plug the budget.

Richard Amper and crowd are screaming "foul." They wanted these monies to be used to bail themselves out of the pine barrens fiasco. People who own land within the pine barrens want to be compensated for these lands that the Pine Barrens Bill has stripped of economic value. They are justified in demanding payment as the land no longer has development possibilities and has been made virtually useless. The 14th Amendment of the Constitution very plainly states that the government cannot seize an individual's land, or the value of it, without just compensation.

The pine barrens were sold by fraud just like the 1/4% sales tax increase. Water, although a criterion, was not the only factor. Amper wanted open space. He wanted to control thousands of acres of land. He knew that if he went to the public and tried

to sell an open space project of this magnitude, the voters would have opposed it. Camouflaging it by creating fear that if we did not preserve the land, we would not have fresh water in the future, gained the public's support. The whole pine barrens concept was touted to the public with the notion that if we did not acquire all this acreage, our future water had the potential of being contaminated.

When the bill was being put together, we questioned the economics. The details were not forthcoming, particularly those concerning the transfer of development rights. Anybody who took a hard look at the finances of the state or county quickly came to the conclusion that both of these governments only had limited financial resources. With the cutbacks coming out of Washington, huge strains would be put on both governments.

Looking at the 1996 Suffolk County budget it became apparent to us that there is a shortfall of anywhere from \$50 million to \$500 million. This shortfall will develop over 1996 as the federal funds that we used to hire the new police officers come to an end, the labor contracts come up for negotiations, and the potential liability from the second \$500 million certiorari suit from LILCO is finalized.

These potential shortfalls do not leave any surplus monies to buy lands. The Suffolk County Legislature reduced the temporary sales tax by 1/4%. It was the water quality money that enabled them to do it. The water quality sales tax money itself is due to expire in 1999, as it also was just intended to be a temporary sales tax.

The Suffolk County Legislature and the county executive will once again be faced with meeting short-term financial needs of running the government, providing health care for the needy and food for the hungry. They will have to make a decision on prioritizing. Somehow, we do not feel that most of these legislators will put land acquisition over social needs.

It's going to be an interesting year.

And why not?

# One school district makes much sense

During a recent conversation with Dr. Edward Milliken, superintendent of Eastern Suffolk BOCES, we touched on the subject of consolidating all the school districts in Suffolk. Surprisingly, we found him in support of this concept.

Milliken asked, rhetorically, why do we need the duplication of services for individual districts? Why not one superintendent for all Suffolk County schools? One employment bureau that all districts can call upon for its hiring, firing and personnel needs? Why not one insurance policy covering all school districts, and one transportation department rather than every district trying to do it on their own?

Think of the savings that could be brought about if we could eliminate and consolidate all administrative po-

sitions, but allow local school boards to continue to be elected by local residents of the various districts. They would also continue to select the curriculum, hire the building principal and be responsible for the operation of the schools. A county superintendent's office could take care of all the rest of the red tape and bureaucratic and administrative requirements.

It makes good sense to us and might just be a first step in bringing the cost of education down. Consolidation is a controversial prospect for many because of the "loss of local control." A regional consolidation of administration, services and purchasing which maintains local control of each district's schools is an idea that should be seriously considered.

And why not?