

WILLMOTTS & WHY NOTS

DAVID J. WILLMOTT SR., EDITOR

"There, But For The Grace Of God, Go I"

This is the banner that a group of Suffolk County residents gather under each year. We provide Christmas for children whose parents normally would be able to, but because of circumstances beyond their control must tell the children that Santa can't come this year. An accident, illness, unemployment or some other tragedy that has befallen them.

We learn about these people and their tragedies from churches, schools and from within the community. We investigate the circumstances, verify the need and

then go about providing clothing—from underwear to outerwear—for the children. After we make sure that they are warm in body, we provide them with toys, games and other gifts that they had no hope of receiving. Finally, we make sure there is food on the table for Christmas Day and for days to come.

The beauty of this project is that it is all done anonymously. The names of the recipients are only known to a limited number of people who do the initial investigation to determine the needs of those

families.

The children are identified by first name, the family only by a letter of the alphabet. The families do not know who their benefactors are. In fact, in many cases, the first contact they have with us is when one of the group calls to ask about delivery and requests that the children not be at home when the delivery is made. We want the parents to have the opportunity to give the gifts to the children directly, so the kids do not have to know that they came from an outside source.

We depend on donations from residents throughout Suffolk County to carry off this huge endeavor. Every penny raised is spent on the kids, not one cent is used for fund raising or administrative costs. These services are all donated by volunteers and organizations. No one gets any credit, whether they are a donor or a volunteer worker.

"The Group" is in its 19th year of exis-

tence. Many of the original members are still involved. "The Group" has no charter; is not a registered charity. Contributors receive no receipts or tax credits. "The Group" is just pure giving, pure volunteerism.

Each year we have been able to accommodate 50 to 60 families, helping Santa bring the warmth of a smile to 250 to 300 children.

Most of us realize that although we may be fortunate today and have our health and wealth, at any time we too can be struck and face some form of devastation. "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

We encourage you to become a member of "The Group" by making a donation or volunteering. You may contact us by writing to "The Group," P.O. Box 167, Riverhead, New York 11901

And why not?

A Wheelchair, Baby Carriage And Cop Car Budget

Suffolk County Office of Budget Review has analyzed County Executive Robert Gaffney's proposed 1998 budget.

Reading the report, presented by BRO Director Fred Pollert, you get the impression that Gaffney's budget has several huge holes in it.

Gaffney has deliberately cut out or cut back numerous positions and sensitive items, knowing full well these proposed cutbacks will cause such an uproar that our county executive expects the legislature will be forced to restore them.

Gaffney, to make up for the arbitration awards for the county police, has cut back on social programs. The cops won a ruling granting them an 18% salary increase. Gaffney had indicated at the time of the award, that there was money in the budget to pay for it.

He also promised there was money to fund the AME (Association of Municipal Employees) contract, but now Suffolk County does not have sufficient funds to meet these expenditures.

The legislature passed the Caracappa bill that required the county executive to reduce expenses by \$28 million. But

the county executive has selectively enforced the provisions of the Caracappa bill.

Instead of coming up with \$28 million in savings, according to the Budget Review Office, the county executive only has enacted \$10 million in cuts. This leaves the county with an \$18 million shortfall for 1998.

If the Gaffney budget is passed, this will require an increase of 9% to 20% in real estate taxes within the police district. Gaffney has boxed in the legislature with his budget, but something has to give.

The residents of Suffolk County cannot absorb a tax increase. Many families are financially teetering, barely able to hold on to their homes. If the county executive does not have the wherewithal to protect the taxpayers, then the legislature is our only hope. The legislature must find the will to not only stand up to the special lobbyists, who will advocate for their segment of the population, but they must find the courage to cut even further, to avoid any tax increases.

And why not?

Warning To Seniors

A *Suffolk Life* reader, Caroline Edwards, forwarded to us an article from the October 1, 1997 Wall Street Journal and asked us to pass this information on to our readers.

The article by Kent Madison Brown alerts the public to a major change in the Medicare Law effective January 1, 1998.

Seniors receiving care, under Medicare B, will be denied the opportunity of paying for and going beyond Medicare B's prescribed coverage. Physicians will be banned from being Medicare B providers if they accept payment over and above what is allowed by the federal government.

The standards under Medicare B are quite strict and repressive. Brown gave an example of a patient in a nursing home only being allowed one visit a month from a physician. If a patient had the money, was willing to spend it and wanted more frequent visits, a physician could not provide it or that physician would be suspended from participating in Medicare B

programs.

This is frightening, big government intrusion into our personal lives. It is one of the worst aspects that was feared under Hillary Clinton's tabled health plan.

The federal government has enacted this provision through regulation rather than through law. The culprit in this injustice is the Health Care Financial Administration, an agency directly under President Clinton's control.

Senator John Kyl (R) of Arizona and Representative Bill Archer (R) of Texas have introduced a bill entitled "The Medicare Benefit Freedom To Contract Act." The legislation clearly states the rights of Americans over 65 to privately contract with physicians of their choice.

We encourage you to write to your congressmen and senators, asking them to put their full support behind this bill. If it passes, President Clinton is expected to veto it, but that will be a fight for another day.

And why not?



Give Us Our Money Now

LILCO is holding millions of dollars that belong to the ratepayers. In the mid-eighties, the federal government changed the rules on taxes. LILCO had collected an estimated \$500 million from ratepayers that, because of the changes, it did not have to forward to the federal government. LILCO did not return that money to the taxpayers. It was allowed to keep the \$500 million for 30 years.

LILCO owes us this money and if the deal goes through, LILCO will cease to exist. This obligation should be paid back to the ratepayers, now.

LILCO has recovered over \$120 million from its certiorari suits against the Port Jefferson power plant and Shoreham. Suffolk County borrowed the money to pay LILCO. LILCO is sitting on it. It's the ratepayers' money and should be paid directly to them, now.

There is \$180 million still due the ratepayers because of the racketeering suit that LILCO was found to be guilty of by a jury. This should be returned to the ratepayers, now. In total, each ratepayer is owed about \$800.

Pending is the \$1.2 billion Shoreham

certiorari settlement. LILCO has not collected this yet, but if it does, it should be returned dollar for dollar with interest to the ratepayers. The Public Service Commission should order the return of this money immediately.

A year ago last August, the staff of the Public Service Commission recommended that the PSC order LILCO to cut utility rates by 5.5%. The staff had determined that LILCO was spending 50% more than other similar utilities in the Northeast on operations and maintenance. The PSC was poised to act when they were ordered by Governor George Pataki to put this cut on hold because of the LIPA negotiations. As a result, we have paid 5.5% more for electricity over the last 14 months than we should have.

The PSC should override Pataki's order and grant this rate reduction, now. There is no logical, fair or honest reason not to give Long Island ratepayers this relief. There is no need to wait for the deal. This is our money, our rate relief, and we are entitled to it, now.

And why not?

WILLMOTTS & WHY NOTS

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Energy's Future and Our Taxes

Two weeks ago, the *New York Times* and several other publications announced our energy future. Technology is here today—and will be on the market within two years—which will allow commercial enterprises and homeowners to generate their own electricity for six to 10 cents a kilowatt hour.

Larger commercial establishments will use micro-turbines that will be not much larger than the size of a window air conditioner. They will be fueled by natural gas, propane gas, ethyl, or other fuels. They will run manufacturing plants, supermarkets and shopping centers.

Homeowners will have access to fuel cell units that will not be much bigger than the size of a washing machine. The public will be able to buy them outright or have them installed without charge and pay for metered electricity at the rate of six to 10 cents per kilowatt hour. These energy machines will be quiet and generate far less pollution than current plants.

Both these technologies have been developed and installation will start before the new millennium. Long Island, with or without LILCO, will be a prime targeted area because of the high cost of electricity under LILCO and projected cost under LIPA. Residents would see an immediate 40% to 50% drop in the cost of electricity.

These are not the harebrained schemes of upstart companies. They are the product of respected companies such as Allied Signal and forward thinking utilities who know that this is the wave of the future. Both technologies gain 40% to 80% more power out of each measurement of fuel. They do not have to pay transmission and distribution charges for overhead wires or maintenance.

Within five years, automobiles will be powered by electrical fuel cells. They will also be fueled by gasoline purchased from established stations and will get two to three times the mileage from each gallon of gasoline over traditional combustion engines. Automobiles will not have the massive batteries needed for current electrical vehicles and will not need to be recharged every 50 to 100 miles.

The world of energy is rapidly changing. Modern technology will make current technology obsolete.

This does not bode well for LIPA. Most Long Islanders, given the opportunity, will flee the death grip of this authority. When both commercial and residential accounts go off the grid, there will be fewer customers to pay back the bonds LIPA intends to issue. One electrical industry economist took this knowledge into account and predicted that within five years of LIPA taking over LILCO, it will face certain bankruptcy as the revenues from existing accounts will not be enough to meet the bonding obligations.

LIPA's bonds will not carry the full faith

and credit of New York State. Even though there will not be this guarantee, the state will be in a very precarious position, because if LIPA goes under, it would affect the state's credit rating. If the state bails out LIPA it will reflect on the entire state's tax base, mandating that either taxes be raised or programs cut back.

We believe LILCO is fully aware of the new technology and the effect it will have on the company if it remains as is.

Pataki's industry gurus may not be up to speed on this issue and have not thought out the ramifications and are therefore still supporting the takeover.

Interestingly, LILCO still comes out the big beneficiary under its new reconstruction. Under the deal, LILCO/BUG gets \$1.9 billion to invest in its gas business. The gas business, like the electrical business, is regulated and they are guaranteed a profit over and above expenses.

LILCO/BUG will have a monopoly on the gas business controlling the transportation and distribution. With the \$1.9 billion gift from the ratepayers of Long Island, it will be able to improve and enlarge its gas system, once again charging the ratepayers for this investment.

The new technology for generating electricity is designed to use natural gas even though other alternative sources of fuel may be used. The ghost of Shoreham never dies, it just keeps reinventing itself to LILCO's benefit.

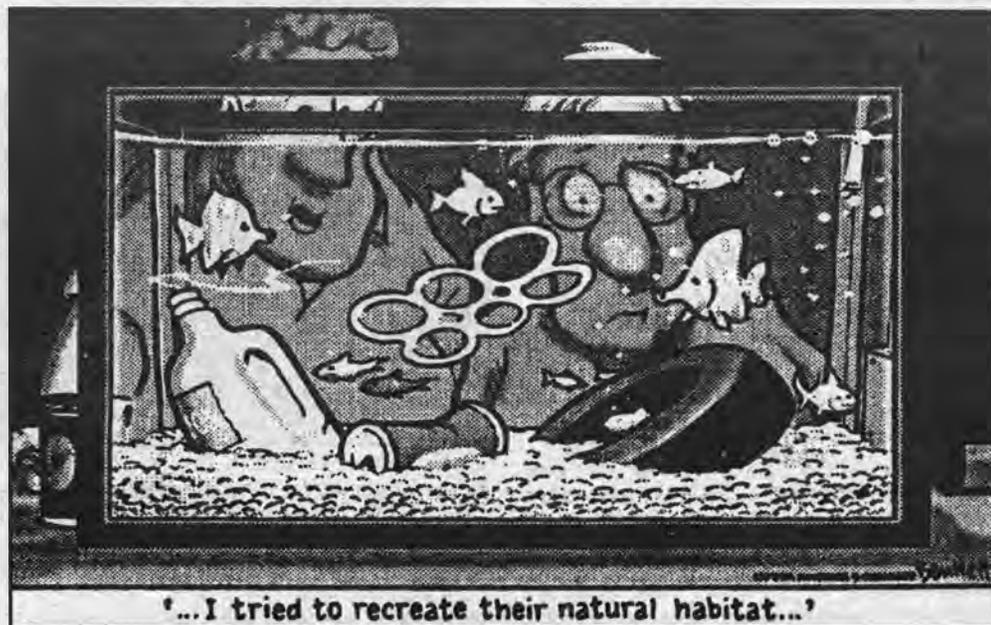
Let us count the ways we have paid for Shoreham: CWIP funds and stability payments amount to more than the prudent cost of the plant. The Cuomo deal that closed Shoreham paid for the plant over again, yet we are still being charged for it. The Pataki deal will pay for the plant dollar for dollar, plus a handsome profit. The excess profits from the Shoreham deal will be invested in improving the LILCO/BUG gas lines, which will be charged against the ratepayers so that they can pay for Shoreham again.

Governor Pataki and his energy gurus must take a hard look at the changes coming in technology and how they will affect Long Island. Even a neophyte taking Economics 101 should be able to see that if people using this new technology can produce electricity at half the cost of LIPA, they are not going to stay LIPA customers. Competition will bankrupt LIPA, the bonds will go into default and the state will have to step in.

If you were governor, would you allow the state to go down the drain to save a private company like LILCO or would you cut LILCO loose from this deal?

Let competition in the marketplace take its toll. The choice is Pataki's. We, the people, can't vote, but we will abandon LIPA in droves at the first opportunity, and you can bet on it!

And why not?



Election 1997

The votes have been counted, the winners announced, and there were few surprises.

To the winners, we offer our congratulations. To the losers, we offer our condolences, but more importantly, some advice. Many of you showed the potential of being good candidates. Unfortunately, it appeared that you had not done your homework and did not convince the voters you would do a better job than your opponent.

No one expects a challenger to have the in-depth knowledge of an incumbent, but he or she should be totally familiar with the primary issues being discussed during the race.

We have noted in the past that successful challengers generally know three or four issues intimately. The positions they have taken on the issues are founded in fact, logic and reason. They not only understand the issues, but have developed positions and plans on how to deal with the problems.

When we, as an editorial board, interview candidates, we do not necessarily want those candidates to agree with our philosophies. We do want to see the intellect, the foundation work and the logic that

has brought them to their conclusions. We want to see candidates who are sincere, firm in their beliefs, people who are true to themselves.

We encourage many of the unsuccessful candidates this year to stay involved. Go to your board meetings, follow government during the next two years. Speak out when it is appropriate. Try to be quoted by reporters. Send letters to the editors, try to get published. Broaden your base, get involved in school boards and other community endeavors. Be of service to your community before you ask your community for its support.

To all those who took part in Election 1997, whether a candidate, a campaign worker or a poll counter, we say thank you.

To those voters who turned out, you took part in forming your government. You have a right to speak up if your government does not operate the way you want it to.

To those who stayed away from the polls, we are saddened because you gave up a right that men and women have died for.

Again, congratulations to all those who took part in the election.

And why not

Regulate Jet Skis

Have you ever ridden on or piloted a jet ski or water bike? We have. They are fun, they are thrilling, and can be very enjoyable, but dangerous.

Under current regulations, anyone can go to a jet ski rental station, and by plunking down \$50 to \$60, can take the jet ski out on the water without one bit of training or knowledge of the machine or the navigation rules of the water.

Currently, hearings are being held that may lead to a requirement for schooling and testing before one is allowed to operate these small vessels. Unfortunately, the jet skiers have brought this upon themselves.

We operate a fairly large sport fisherman vessel. On more weekends than we care to remember, coming back to shore through the inlet, we have had jet skiers come out of nowhere, cutting across both our bow and stern. The inlet is treacherous

enough without having this added concern. What operators of these crafts do not understand is that a large boat operator is often fighting tide and currents, their maneuverability is limited and when pushed by a wave, stopping is out of the question.

It becomes a game of cat and mouse going across the bay. Jet skiers sitting and waiting in hopes of catching your wake. Jet skiers venture into the ocean and often face seas and currents that also pose a danger. A lack of understanding puts them in peril.

If the state is going to require education and licensing, it might also consider designating specific areas and times that the jet skiers can operate.

Jet skiers need a set of laws, rules and regulations, both as a guideline and as a deterrent to reckless behavior.

And why not?

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Honoring Our Own

During the year, *Suffolk Life* comes across numerous citizens in Suffolk County that go one step further in improving our quality of life or being of service to a fellow citizen.

Most of these outstanding citizens are never recognized, never thanked. Year after year, they go about exemplifying human life and being of service to others.

On January 14, *Suffolk Life* is dedicating an entire issue to give recognition to these people. We hope this special edition become an annual project. We are excited about the project and we hope you will be too.

This year we have picked out 10 categories in each of the 10 towns we serve. We are not looking for the visible politician or the other newsworthy individuals. We are looking for grassroots people who just go about their lives helping others and exemplifying the positive.

The staff at *Suffolk Life* has come up with some nominees, but we are looking for you, our readers, to make nominations of your own. They may be relatives, friends, neighbors, coworkers or a stranger in the dark who you know has reached out their hand to help someone else. Their contributions may not have been huge, but made a difference in your life or the life of someone you know.

It could be a citizen who saw a person

in distress and routinely stopped and offered assistance. It could be someone that put their life in danger to save someone else; a coach or a teacher who took the time to save a child about to go wrong. A nominee could be a business person who went out of his or her way to help an employee or a customer get through a difficult period; a parent who gave his or her all to help their child succeed. It might be a senior citizen who has used his or her retirement time to volunteer to make the community a better place to live.

We have limited ourselves to the 10 categories you will find printed on page three in today's publication. If you know someone who does not fit one of these categories, but should be considered for recognition, we will accept nominations for them too.*

We ask those who are nominating to give us a brief description of the person and the actions that made them exemplary citizens.

A panel of *Suffolk Life* staffers has volunteered to go through the nominations and to select this year's choices. This will not be an easy task, but one we are looking forward to.

Suffolk's own should be recognized, and this is your opportunity to place someone worthy into consideration. The winners will be announced on January 14 in a

coordinate the families' needs, no one knows who the recipients are. The families are simply identified by a letter of the alphabet and the children just by their first names.

"The Group" pools its own resources and solicit donations from Suffolk residents who want to make a difference in a person's life. Although we are in our 18th year, we are not an organized charity. Not one cent is spent on administration or overhead costs. Everything is donated.

Volunteers do the shopping, the wrapping and the delivering. We have one very simple motto, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." All of us have either experienced it or know that if the circumstances were reversed, we could be next.

There are hundreds of families who need help; we will help as many as our resources and our time allow. Everything we do is controlled by the amount of money we have to spend and the number of hands we have available for the many tasks.

If you, or a member of your family, would like to bring special joy to special kids by becoming a member of "The Group," we appreciate your aid.

You may send your contribution to "The Group," c/o P.O. Box 167, Riverhead, New York 11901.

And why not?

special commemorative edition. Not only will the winners be recognized, but we will tell you why they deserve that recognition.

We are looking forward to this publi-

cation. We hope you join us in our excitement and become a participant by giving us a list of your own nominees.

And why not?

Big Loss For Democracy 'Con-Con' Defeated

The only surprise, and our only disappointment, in the recent election was that the voters turned down the opportunity to have a Constitutional Convention in New York State.

We are sure many voters were confused on this issue. The United States has a Constitution by which we are all governed. New York State has a Constitution that pertains specifically to issues of state and how state government is run.

The founding fathers who wrote the original Constitution for New York State believed it should be a fluid document and that the document, the blueprint for our government, should be reviewed every 20 years. They were wise men, because times change and the need to revamp the laws that regulate us can, and do, become archaic.

Some of the opponents to the Constitutional Convention disliked the fact that state officials could become members of the convention. They argued that state legislators have the ability to change the Constitution during legislative sessions if they have the will and the desire.

They argued that sitting legislators should be precluded from being members of the Constitutional Convention. Sitting legislators would be torn between legisla-

tive and convention work. Conventioneers and legislators would be paid the same salary. They would be double-dipping.

We completely agree on this point, but it was no reason to turn down the opportunity for a convention.

Legislators can correct this inequity anytime they want by passing a law exempting sitting legislators from being eligible to be candidates. There is no question that New York State government as it now exists is a model of inefficiency—it's broken and it should be fixed.

Too much power and control is vested in the leaders of the assembly and senate and the governor. There is no incentive to change how government works because they all have their heads in the trough. Those with powerful lobbies know how to manipulate the system to their benefit, often at the expense of the average resident.

The legislature must pass a law that forbids sitting legislators from being participants in the convention and, through its own power, enact a Constitutional Convention.

Don't wait another 20 years to give the electorate the opportunity.

And why not?

'To Thine Own Self Be True' Lt. Governor Lazio?

Ratepayers Against The LILCO Bailout have requested that the Suffolk congressional delegation comprised of Michael Forbes, Rick Lazio and Gary Ackerman call for Federal Energy Regulation Commission hearings on Long Island to look into the competitiveness of the proposed LILCO-LIPA deal.

Three weeks ago, all three congressional members agreed to make a joint announcement. It was a good political move. The congressmen would appear to be concerned about the ratepayers and the truth about the deal's competitiveness would prevail through the hearings.

While calling for the hearings to be on Long Island, the congressional members did not have to take a position one way or the other on the proposed deal. They just had to announce that the hearings would

be held, the facts would be brought out and an open, honest discussion would be allowed.

Last week, Lazio let it be known that he was postponing his participation because of "scheduling conflicts."

It also became known that he was in serious discussion with Governor George Pataki over the possibility of his becoming Pataki's running mate as lieutenant governor.

Lazio's pulling back on calling for the hearings is more than coincidental. He sold out his support for a shot at lieutenant governor. Pataki bought him off. Ain't that a shame!

It's often said every politician's soul has a price. We now know what Lazio's was worth.

And why not?

Much To Do, Little Time Group's Effort Underway

Usually there are five weekends between Thanksgiving and Christmas. This year there are only four. "The Group" has begun its efforts to provide Christmas for kids whose parents normally are able to provide for them, but due to circumstances beyond their control, cannot do so this year.

Because of the limited time, all our schedules have had to be moved up. "The Group" processes applications, selects recipients, inventories their needs and then buys the kids everything from socks and underwear to outerwear and, of course, toys and games and other items that make Christmas so meaningful for children.

The families we help are those who slip through the cracks. They generally are hard-working Suffolk residents who have been struck by some unexpected tragedy, illness, accident, job loss or loss of a business. Their financial world has turned upside down. Most are too proud to ask for help, but their circumstances become known and their plight reaches us.

"The Group" is comprised of individuals who, by combining their resources, their time and their effort, are able to provide these families with Christmas.

Everything is done anonymously. The recipients never know who their benefactors are and outside of a few people who

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The LILCO Bashers

Those who have adamantly opposed the controversial \$7.6 billion partial takeover plan negotiated between the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) and the Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO) have been accused repeatedly of "LILCO bashing." The bashing charge has been hurled by LIPA officials, and others, who have a vested interest in the ultimate approval of the plan.

But the ranks of "LILCO bashers" grew by one recently when LIPA, which has the most to gain from the plan, unleashed some heavy criticism of its own against LILCO.

That criticism came in the form of a filing with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) which strongly opposed a proposed future budget filed by LILCO which would have an impact on electric rates following final approval of the LIPA takeover proposal.

According to LIPA, the budget proposal violates the terms of the Power Supply Agreement (PSA) between the utility and LIPA, a long-term contract for the purchase of LILCO generated power following LIPA's takeover.

LIPA and LILCO, the LIPA brief claims, were to have signed off on the budget proposal jointly and cooperatively under the terms of the PSA. However, there was no agreement between the two. LIPA simply filed its own version of the budget proposal with FERC, which must ultimately approve the budget and future rates.

LIPA claims LILCO's budget proposal "attempts to obtain 'double credit' and, indeed, double payment for the same cost" in one budget category. The LILCO rate proposal, LIPA claims, "...contains substantially higher rates than LIPA believes can be justified and would be approved under the contractually required budget process. If the rates...become effective as filed, Long Island ratepayers will pay more for electricity than is justified."

We applaud LIPA for its strong language and close scrutiny against any additional ratepayer bashing by LILCO. We welcome this showing of backbone by LIPA against LILCO's questionable billing actions that have caused ratepayers to suffer so much for so long.

The charge of "double billing" is not a new one against LILCO. The dubious accounting of the ratepayer payback for the Shoreham nuclear power plant is a prime example. And ratepayers have, for much too long, been paying more for electricity than is justified.

Bloating the figures to benefit LILCO is nothing new. It is something we have come to expect from the arrogant management of the utility.

The foes of the proposed LILCO-LIPA deal have been down this road before. The opposition they have raised has been targeted at the actions by LILCO, not LILCO itself. But those who have rushed to judgment on the proposed LILCO-LIPA deal and seek its approval, apparently at any cost, ignore the message those foes

deliver and they target on the messengers.

A case in point. On November 6, *Newsday* published an editorial entitled, "Guess Why Heating Oil Dealers Hate LIPA's Plan." *Newsday* was bent out of shape because the Oil Heat Institute has dared to file with FERC to become interveners in the LILCO-LIPA matter before the federal agency.

Newsday whined: "OHI's most serious threat is its effort to have the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission combine two pending LIPA filings. The first—a FERC review of the LIPA deal—needs to move expeditiously for the plan to proceed. The second—approving the rates for the power LILCO will sell LIPA—could take longer if LIPA is to get the best deal for consumers." *Newsday* insisted, "There's no compelling reason the two filings should be combined and every reason they shouldn't be. FERC should reject the interveners' request and not allow LIPA's opponents to tie up the plan in federal red tape."

The very next day, news came that LIPA and LILCO were at odds over the proposed future LILCO rates. If *Newsday's* judgment became reality—approve the deal and then we'll talk about the future rates the deal will bring—the ratepayers would be stuck with inflated bills.

If LILCO can't be trusted to adhere to the Power Service Agreement and the host of other agreements included in the deal, what value does the deal have? Just who is it that *Newsday* is seeking to protect here? And why?

Until now, it appeared LIPA had accepted as absolute truth everything presented by LILCO. For example, LIPA agreed to assume a \$4.5 billion Shoreham Regulatory Asset as a condition of the deal. The validity of that amount—the \$4.5 billion—was accepted by LIPA during negotiations without an audit of the figures other than that prepared for LILCO by its hired accountants.

Suffolk Life was told that a Public Service Commission audit also verified that amount, but a requested copy of that PSC audit was never received. A second request for a copy of a PSC audit was directed to Senator James Lack, a staunch deal proponent. He went out of his way to promise to provide that report, but he has not delivered.

How much have ratepayers already contributed to the cost of the Shoreham disaster? There have been estimates that \$8 billion have already been taken from ratepayers' pockets in the form of rate increases and other PSC gifts to the utility. There have been charges that LILCO utilized some of the ratepayers payback dollars to boost dividends to its stockholders rather than pay down the Shoreham bill.

LIPA must not thrust this \$4.5 billion burden onto the shoulders of ratepayers until there is firm verification that the amount is legitimate; until it is proven that this figure is not simply another example



of double, or perhaps triple, billing on the part of LILCO's arrogant management.

The truth will never be known if the deal is consummated before the facts are uncovered. The 1989 agreement between former Governor Mario Cuomo and LILCO, which drove Long Island's rates to the highest in the nation, is proof that hastily approved deals without sufficient scrutiny can be disastrous.

We welcome LIPA's belated display of hard-nosed scrutiny of LILCO's fictional financial masterpieces. We would be elated if this determination to protect the ratepayer from LILCO's billing shenanigans became permanent.

We are not overly optimistic this will be the case because there is too much money riding on the outcome. Money that will go into political coffers and enrich many in the financial world, all at the expense of the ratepayers.

LIPA officials have, for too long, bent over backwards and given in to LILCO in

the negotiations of this deal. Top LIPA officials have attempted to discredit any alternative that is offered. It is time those who have been appointed as LIPA trustees, whose obligation is to protect the welfare of the ratepayers, stand up and become players in this matter. They can no longer simply echo the views of the top LIPA officials who have, until now, been partners with LILCO in attempting to impose their deal on the public.

LILCO management has proven time and time again that it will stop at nothing to financially benefit itself, no matter what the cost or impact on the ratepayers.

It was convicted in federal court of lying to the PSC during the construction of Shoreham, and of bloating budget figures in the past. It's time the area's state representatives and LIPA trustees take a strong stand to protect the ratepayers against the proposed Pataki-LILCO-LIPA deal that will kill Long Island's future if it is not stopped.

And why not?

Happy Thanksgiving!

The staff at *Suffolk Life* would like to take this opportunity to wish each of our readers a special Thanksgiving.

This has been a good year. It's had its ups and downs, but we have much to be thankful for. We have seen good friends stricken with major illnesses and were fortunate enough to recover.

We have seen an improvement in the economy that has resulted in better business. We have seen innovations at *Suffolk Life* brought about by a new staff.

We have been successful in getting the story out about LILCO and the LIPA

takeover. We would be thankful if this terrible deal was behind us, but it isn't. We ask the good Lord to give us strength to keep fighting.

Tomorrow, before you sit down for dinner, remember to bow your head so that we may each find at least one thing to give thanks for that has made a difference.

Share your blessings with others as an encouragement, and wish each other a very Happy Thanksgiving.

And why not?

Notice To Mariners

If you are a boater and you use a Loran for navigation, you may be out of luck on January 1, 2000.

The Department of Transportation is conducting a Congressionally ordered review of the decision to scrap Loran C. Public comments are being accepted up until December 15, 1997.

Loran is one of the most universally used navigational tools. Many boaters use both Loran and GPS systems to check one against the other and have a tendency to rely on and use the Loran more often.

It costs about \$17 million per year for the federal government to maintain the Loran system. This is chicken feed when you look at the trillions of dollars the government spends on everything else.

We encourage boaters to send their protests and their comments to Joseph R. Davis of Booz, Allen & Hamilton Inc., 8251 Greensboro Drive, McLean, Virginia 22102, or you may fax your comments to 703-977-3023. This firm is conducting the review for the federal government.

And why not?