

Actions Speak Louder

This past week most Suffolk County residents received a letter from Peter Cohalan attempting to justify and explain why he had betrayed the people of the county he was elected to serve. The letter cost \$33,000 to mail. It was not sent at Mr. Cohalan's expense. It was not sent as a campaign committee's expense. It was sent at the expense of us, the taxpayers.

All the words in the world could not justify Peter Cohalan's betrayal of the people. His actions speak louder than words. A traitor is a traitor. The cause makes no difference. Peter Cohalan had been elected by the people of Suffolk County based on his pledge to oppose the opening of the Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant. Cohalan had long maintained there was no way for a safe evacuation off Long Island. The roads weren't there, the bridges weren't there. The residents would be stuck, lives would be lost. Cohalan came to this conclusion after authorizing the spending of over \$1,000,000 of our money to develop a county ordered evacuation plan.

Experts in crowd control, traffic management and evacuation specialists had been brought in from around the country. During the research for an evacuation plan, these experts presented evidence to Cohalan and the legislature that overwhelmingly indicated lives would be lost if and when an evacuation had to be ordered because of a possible malfunction of the Shoreham nuclear power plant.

We have no new roads or bridges, just more people to move. Nothing has changed to make evacuation safe. The only thing that has changed

is Cohalan's position.

We all know the history of Shoreham, it was riddled with problems from the day it was first sited above a running artesian well. There were and are design flaws, construction was milked and by testimony from workers in the construction process and quality assurance inspectors, the plant is riddled with flaws and is an accident waiting to happen.

LILCO is in the process of low power testing and daily there are shutdowns caused by malfunctions. The latest incident, a class 4 incident, brought reports of a motor, important to safety, vibrating so badly it sheared off four anchor bolts holding it to its structure. These violent vibrations took place while the plant was operating at under 5% of the maximum load. God help us if the plant ever is allowed to go full power.

Cohalan has made his bed and he must sleep in it. His excuse for his letter was that he wants people to know he hasn't gone all the way to bed with LILCO. In case he has forgotten, we would like to remind Peter that there is no such thing as being a little bit pregnant.

The next time Cohalan wants to spend \$33,000 of our taxes to communicate with us, we hope the content of the letter says, "I am sorry I betrayed you, disgraced myself and my family's name. The only honorable thing I have left to do is to resign before I do any more damage." We think most residents would be willing to pay for the 22 cent stamp for this message.

And why not?

The Immigrant Ingredient

Last week we stopped at a Chinese restaurant for a take-out order. A young Chinese man was standing at the take-out section looking apprehensive. We nodded a greeting and he asked, do you live here? His next questions were, "Is there a university in this city? How long is Long Island, how wide? Is there water separating it from N.Y.C.?" He had never seen any. He had come to our town by train.

He explained he had just arrived from China. He had come to our town by train via Penn Station. The train had arrived here at 7:30 p.m. and he was at work at a quarter after eight. He was waiting to be told his duties. He had a B.A. degree in construction, but would be a waiter while he com-

pleted additional studies so that he could be the best in his chosen field.

We watched him read everything in sight - matchbook covers, labels on containers, licenses on the walls, not letting one moment of time go past wasted. This gentleman has the immigrant ingredient.

We thought back to when our people came to this country and how they too must have had the quest for knowledge, the desire to pursue the golden dream. Time and fate alone will tell whether this gentleman will be successful. We will take a bet he will be and will contribute in many ways to the growth and the prosperity of our and his chosen country.

Welcome to America.

And why not?

Salute and Disgust

Hurricane Gloria's passage through our area left behind a wake of destruction in some areas, and many instances of public service far beyond the norm. It brought out the best in many of the police and fire personnel who responded to emergencies throughout the storm, who surely earned our gratitude for their selfless actions during a dangerous time.

A salute must also go to the crews of the Long Island Lighting Company and the crews from utilities outside our area, who have worked long and hard in an effort to restore power to the many darkened areas throughout Long Island. Their job is monumental and they deserve much credit. They are, understandably, dealing with an impatient public anxiously awaiting the return of power, and have taken the full brunt of the anger that has long been targeted at LILCO's management. They shouldn't. The problems of rates and Shoreham do not fall on their shoulders. And they have no instant magic to make the lights go back on instantly. Instead, they must cut away trees and limbs from tangled power lines, working at restoring the system by solving problem by problem. They deserve our thanks, not our anger.

The anger should be directed, instead, at the management of LILCO which made an effort to couple the distribution of dry ice to support of the Shoreham nuclear power plant.

Police have reported that at areas where LILCO was distributing dry ice to residents without power, the residents were being asked to sign petitions in support of Shoreham. That's an attempt to use a disaster situation for their own benefit, an example of the arrogance that has earned LILCO's management the scorn of the public.

Shoreham would not have helped the current situation. In fact, it may have made a dangerous situation even worse. We don't know how much LILCO's austerity condition, caused by their senseless journey to put Shoreham on line, impacted the company's pre-storm efforts on trimming branches and preparing for the storm. Governor Cuomo has established a special panel to investigate that situation. Certainly LILCO can't be blamed for every tree that fell across power lines. But were they prepared? Did they have a sufficient stock of transformers and other necessary equipment to repair the damage they knew had to be coming? The governor's investigation should provide the answers to those questions. And if it can be shown that LILCO was not properly prepared, adequate punitive action should be taken.

In the meantime, LILCO's management should learn a lesson from its employees, who are working very hard to serve the public, not deceive it.

And why not?

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NEWSPAPERS and Suffolk County Life

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Time To Go Public

We are conservative by nature and generally abhor the idea of socialism. But there comes a time in everyone's life when they must re-think their philosophies, at least, on a case specific basis.

We have been no supporter of the management of LILCO. Our differences have been with the actions and the lack of responsibility shown by management in the creation and development of the Shoreham nuclear power plant. Because of our involvement in this issue, we have become intimately familiar with most aspects of the company, the responsibility of a utility and the supposed oversight by the Public Service Commission.

Prior to Shoreham the Long Island Lighting Company, which was founded as a private utility in the late 40's, had the respect of most Long Island residents. The Long Island Lighting Company had been created out of a maze of small independent utilities, each operating on their own, tied together by transmission lines and little else. In these various utilities, service ranged from excellent to deplorable. Rates varied accordingly. The condition of the plants in many cases bordered on dilapidated, and thus rose the need for one centralized utility with the resources to keep the utility in top condition, providing uninterrupted and reliable service.

The management of LILCO in the mid 60's decided to enter the nuclear era, to build an atomic energy plant on a projected cost of \$250 million, a small part of the total worth of the company. Now almost \$5 billion later, LILCO is saddled with a plant that everyone admits is a mistake, should not have been started and most residents feel should not open. The utility itself is in a shambles.

Nothing portrayed better how bad a condition the physical plant was in than "Gloria." Almost 2½ million people here on Long Island were without electricity in the wake of the storm. One week later, a half million

people still had not received electricity. Repairs made by LILCO workers and imported crews from throughout the northeast were breaking down again systematically, putting hundreds of thousand of residents out of electricity again due to a simple rain storm.

We have heard repeatedly that the outside crews were amazed at the poor condition of the LILCO system. They expressed disbelief, and questioned how a regulated utility could get away with allowing a system to deteriorate this badly. They complained of jerryrigged wires, deteriorated cable, rotted poles, outdated transformers and a host of other run-down equipment. We have heard from different sections of the county the questions posed by these outside crews, that they did not believe we could receive power on a regular basis with the system in such poor condition.

This system is a victim of mindful, deliberate neglect. The management of LILCO did it and they must take the responsibility for it. Taking the responsibility though is not enough. The time is now for a change. The change must come with a public takeover by the people, the users of the system.

A Long Island Power Authority must be formed that will enable the people to select their directors with a mandate to create an authority to own, operate and restore LILCO as a working, functioning utility. An authority that will be responsive and aware of the public.

We have here on Long Island three such public utility companies. One is the system that supplies electricity in Greenport. The rates for power supplied by this system are almost a third less than those charged by LILCO. The day after the storm, they were capable of restoring power to most of the residents they serve. Freeport has its own power utility and this too operates efficiently and effectively at rates almost a third less than LILCO charges. Much of

Suffolk County's water is supplied by an authority. This too, although at times subject to political criticism, operates efficiently and effectively for the people's best interest.

Throughout the country there are hundreds of municipally-owned power companies and authorities. Most work well. Politics are kept out of them and there is no profit built into the rates. Initially these entities raise the capitalization for their creation through the sale of bonds, and that is what is proposed for the funding to take over the Long Island Lighting Company.

In the days ahead we will be hearing much more as plans are released. A group of citizens has formed a steering committee to get this idea off the ground. The group is made up of many prominent citizens from all walks of life and different political persuasions.

Enough Is Enough!

We knew that one of LILCO's staunch flunkies would, one day and somewhere along the line, try to use the evacuation activity for Hurricane Gloria as an excuse for why an evacuation for the Shoreham nuclear power plant could be possible. We didn't know who or when, but we knew for sure it would happen.

It turned out to be Newsday, LILCO's staunchest ally, who tried to slip in that silly logic only four days after Gloria's visit.

In an editorial, Newsday was taking shots at Governor Mario Cuomo for expressing concern that the restoration of power was taking too long, and for seeking an investigation into LILCO's preparedness for the storm. Newsday noted "Cuomo's hostility toward LILCO is not new, of course," pointing out his long standing opposition to Shoreham. Then Newsday worried: "His order to the Public Service Commission (for a detailed evaluation of LILCO's preparedness), and some of his comments about LILCO's ability to deal with the effects of the storm, suggest a subliminal message: If LILCO can't handle the emergency created by Gloria, how can it possibly deal with a crisis that might arise from an accident at Shoreham?"

Then Newsday did the expected: "But the fact is--although governmental agencies and not LILCO were responsible--that large areas of Long Island's South Shore were evacuated smoothly and efficiently Thursday night and Friday morning, without a hint of panic or confusion--suggesting, perhaps, another subliminal message: that even a Shoreham emergency could be handled if everyone cooperated."

Newsday, you've got to be kidding! How can anyone equate a hurricane coming up the coast, with days of advance warning and flood waters still far away, with an accident at a nuclear plant and the release of radiation?

How can anyone suggest that moving people a few blocks to higher ground is similar to moving people miles away via traffic clogged roadways?

Is Newsday suggesting that radi-

In today's paper this group has placed an ad giving an overview of the problem and a possible solution. They are asking the public to join with them by both making contributions to enable them to carry the message forth, and for volunteers to work in spreading the message.

I have personally become involved as a member of the Steering Committee. I believe this approach is our last realistic hope for gaining control over our lives. The management of LILCO is attempting to control our government by buying elections so that they may control our future health and safety, as well as our economic well being.

Come join us in saying "Hello Long Island Power, Goodbye LILCO. For further information, to volunteer contributions or to become a volunteer, call 598-1500. I am volunteering. Won't you join me? And why not?"

ation contamination can be dissipated as quickly as flood waters receding with the tide?

Of course there was no panic! Everyone could see there were no flood waters when the evacuation was underway. Can Newsday say the same about radiation, which can't be seen, smelled, heard?

Do people away from the coastal areas evacuate when floods along coastal areas are anticipated? Of course not! But will people far removed from the plant flee when the sirens sound warning of an accident at the plant? Of course they will.

Newsday's effort to equate the evacuation of a relatively small number of people to the general evacuation of the public from radiation contamination proves the extent it has corrupted its editorial integrity for the benefit of LILCO.

Long Island's hurricane experience might also suggest another subliminal message Newsday conveniently overlooked: How possible would an evacuation have been if Shoreham had been damaged or flooded during the hurricane, causing a mishap? If the need to evacuate had occurred during, or even after, the storm, would the sirens have sounded? Would LILCO have been able to handle an evacuation, and storm damage problems, at the same time? How could people have travelled through tree clogged roadways? Without traffic lights?

LILCO reportedly had a \$2 million negative balance in their storm reserve fund? Why? Where did the money go? Did the \$600,000, or more, given to the Citizens to Open Shoreham, include some of those vital dollars? Is that where the money is coming from to pay their high priced public relations experts and consultants who keep pushing for Shoreham's opening? Is that where the money came from for the flood of print and television ads which tell us what a great and efficient company the "new LILCO" has become? Add up the dollars LILCO has spent in its efforts to lobby for the opening of Shoreham and you'll come up with a lot more than the \$2 million negative

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Willmotts and Why-Not's

David J. Willmott, Editor

Public Power Could Cut Rates 25% to 35%

The Citizens Committee for a Long Island Power Authority has released a report from Energy Systems Research Group, Inc. indicating LILCO's rates could be cut by 25 per cent to 35 per cent if the Island was served by the creation of a power authority.

ESRG is a well respected, economic analytical research firm that has worked substantially on utility rate forecast. The Citizens Group for Public Power, upon its formation, commissioned this group to do research to find out whether public power made economic sense. They chose ESRG because of its reputation and its tendency to be conservative in developing financial forecasts.

The central conclusion of the analysis is that a public power alternative does indeed promise substantial benefits to electrical consumers. Furthermore, it is likely that the operation of the Shoreham facility would not make economic sense to an authority, rendering the safety and emergency evacuation issue moot. The report goes on to detail the conclusion and present documentation on the methodology and how its projection of rates were obtained.

ESRG used five different scenarios for the comparisons. The first, using LILCO's projections for conventional rate making, shows that energy costs could jump from 11.7 cents KWH in 1984 to 16.3 cents KWH in 1995. Using the phase-in method as proposed by LILCO, the rate would go from 11.7 cents KWH in 1984 to 18 cents KWH in 1995. Under a public power authority, using the full valuation scenario for acquiring LILCO's assets, the rate could go from 11.7 cents KWH in 1984 to 14.2 cents KWH in 1995. Under the market value scenario, rates could go from 11.7 cents KWH in 1984 to

13.7 cents KWH in 1995. Using the scenario of a public authority, without the cost of Shoreham, the 1984 rate could fall to 9.3 cents KWH in 1986 and then rise over the next ten years to 12.5 cents KWH.

The report goes on to outline various reasons why even these lower rates could be reduced further. It suggests that new information available would indicate it makes no economic sense to operate Shoreham and, because of this, Shoreham would have no economic value.

LILCO's assets could be acquired by a new entity either created independently or as part of our current government. It could be started as an adjunct to the New York Power Authority, then broken off as an independent Long Island Power Authority. Funding for the new entity could come from the issuance of tax free municipal bonds. Most of the working staff and the operations would be retained.

The economic model presented by ESRG took into consideration the expenses of operating the utility, cost of fully rebuilding the transmission system and the development of new energy sources.

The report is the first of many to be done, but its early findings demand that the concept of a Long Island Power Authority be given immediate and full attention from ratepayers and governmental officials.

A public power authority that could save the consumers 25 per cent to 35 per cent on the cost of electricity may be the only logical, economic saviour we have from the mismanaged Long Island Lighting Company.

The Citizens Committee for a Long Island Power Authority is currently distributing information to those who seek it. There are a number of other studies that must be com-

missioned that will be costly. To disseminate this information, to conduct the studies, they are asking the people who will receive the benefits

to help. They need contributions and they need volunteers. If you care to join the Citizens Group, call 598-1500. And why not?

Go On Back, Bill!

LILCO Chairman William Catacosinos has come under fire for continuing his vacation in Europe rather than returning to Long Island to direct the clean-up and repair operations following Hurricane Gloria's violent visit here. We don't think that criticism is correct.

Upon his return, and after LILCO employees and crews from outside the area had labored long and hard to repair the damage, Catacosinos had some interesting things to say:

First, he's decided that LILCO's ratepayers must pick-up the tab for all the repair work, estimated at some \$40 million. Understand, this is a company that has been so preoccupied with putting its ill-advised and unneeded nuclear plant on line that it couldn't afford, or simply never secured, storm insurance, as other utilities in hurricane prone areas do. And, this is the same company that has permitted its storm reserve fund to go into a negative balance. And the same company that has been spending millions in its public relations effort to put Shoreham on line.

And now he wants the already hard-pressed ratepayers to shell out more to make up for LILCO's fiascos? Go on back to Europe, Bill, go on back.

At a press conference last week, Catacosinos had this to say about LILCO's preparedness for Gloria: "We don't know what else we could have done to prepare for Gloria other than what LILCO did." What LILCO did, of course, is to spend millions for political lobbyists, public relations firms, political campaigns to elect candidates favorable to their cause, and for the formation of groups designed to carry LILCO's wishes to the public under the guise they're coming from the public. What LILCO could have done, of course, is to carry on the tree trimming program it reduced to save dollars for the Shoreham effort. It could have made sure it had enough supplies on hand to get started with repairs. And it could have upgraded its system. Instead, from the reports of outside crews not worried about retaliation, LILCO permitted its system to deteriorate.

If Bill Catacosinos does not know what else he could have done other than what LILCO did (or more correctly stated, what they didn't do), he shouldn't be running the utility system Long Island depends upon for its energy needs. LILCO, or a Long Island Power Authority, should look for someone who does know. Go on back to Europe, Bill, go on back.

At that same press conferences, Catacosinos said that the hurricane proved that "you can evacuate the people from around Shoreham." He noted that before the hurricane arrived (with many days of pre-arrival notice) "Long Island was able to evacuate a large portion of the population from the shoreline." And that, in Catacosinos' mind, proves evacuation is possible. While Catacosinos may know his way around Europe, there's a lot he has to learn about Long Island. The major evacuation areas were along the low-lying south shore. They're not within the evacuation zone, unless Catacosinos is now agreeing the zone must be extended to 20 miles, not the 10 miles he insists is sufficient. And that evacuation involved moving a very limited number of people a few blocks to higher ground, hardly the kind of evacuation necessary to escape airborne radiation. Which is deadly.

How many people were evacuated on the north shore, where the plant is located, Bill? And how possible would an evacuation have been in the north shore area where many, many trees lay across roads, blocking traffic. Had you been here, instead of in Europe immediately after the storm, you would have known that, Bill. But you weren't, and with the kind of logic you have expressed since your return, we are probably fortunate you weren't. Go on back to Europe, Bill, go on back.

Catacosinos and his chief cronies, such as Newsday, have been moaning that they are being unfairly criticized. They don't seem to understand that LILCO's credibility is so bad that one upstate crew working on lines here had to put a sign on their truck that declared: "We're not from LILCO," to escape comment from an angry public. Pity the poor LILCO crews who work hard, have no part in the decisions that have destroyed LILCO's reputation and credibility, but have to take the brunt of the public's disgust and anger. If Catacosinos really wants to know what the public feels about his "super utility," he ought to ride the trucks out into the field. He'd get an education.

Better yet, we might be better off if we stop criticizing him for staying in Europe. We ought to encourage him to go back. We think he might have better luck in evacuating Europe than he would the north shore area during a hurricane. Go on back, Bill, go on back.

And why not?

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