

Why economic summit failed

Newday is wringing its hands and asking why a consortium that was brought together by Newsday and the Long Island Association fell apart. They blame the governor for withdrawing his support. They're going to be brave, though, and carry on.

comprised of business, labor and environmental interests. Their purpose was to show support for a concept of these three power bases working in harmony to face Long Island's problems.

While they would be quick to deny it, we suspect, the real reason for the lack of enthusiasm on Long Island is

the fact the leaders of the consortium were many of the same old, tired people who, through following their own agendas, had helped in the collapse of the Long Island economy. It was putting the foxes in the henhouse to see if each had learned that it should not eat the other.

The Long Island Association has for months been bemoaning the fact that Long Island's problem is that it is made up of almost 700 different regulatory and taxing entities. Newsday's problem was that it supported almost every taxing and spending scheme by government and their profiteers without question. The unions had taken advantage of the leader-less and weak government officials and had established wage scales and work rules that were counterproductive to good, solid, economic activity. The environmentalists had never comprehended the word "compromise." Their credo was all or nothing.

This new super agency that was to be created would be a subsidiary of the Urban Development Corporation. The UDC has the power to condemn properties and usurp local governments, ignoring planning commissions

and zoning regulations. In other words, a mother of governmental authority.

The new regional government would supersede all other governments. It would be controlled and operated by the same people who had created the problem. When word leaked out about the new government's lack of response to the citizens, and their confiscatory powers, a ground swell started in opposition.

The governor, with his presidential ear to the ground, heard the beating of the drums and smartly backed off. The message that he heard was that there were people on Long Island who were trying to fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, and he pulled his support out from under this Trojan horse.

Back to the drawing board, guys. Let's get some new faces and new philosophies. Haven't we had enough of those who brought us the controversial and corruption-marred Southwest Sewer District, tried to saddle us with a nuclear plan, and other projects of the same ilk? Try honesty this time.

And why not?

Buyer, beware!

When Suffolk County's bond rating was lowered to junk, we were dismayed. Suffolk's finances have been a mess for years. Budgets traditionally projected overestimated revenues and underestimated expenditures. The lowering of Suffolk's bond rating caused the taxpayers to suffer because of the additional interest the lowered rating caused.

The lowering of the bond rating was the catalyst for increasing the sales taxes. Right up until this rating reduction, the majority of the legislators were opposed to increasing the sales tax to bail out the fiscal mismanagement of the county. These legislators had taken the hard-nosed approach—manage government properly, cut spending, put our house in order. When the bond rating was lowered, Halpin pulled together a coalition of legislators to increase the sales taxes and to put together a package of initiatives that basically borrowed for today at the expense of the future. Monies received as one-shot revenue sources to throw at today's deficit have to be paid back between 1993 and 1996, in some cases at astronomical interest costs. This whole package, including the sales tax increase, did not make sense from a common, fiscal perspective but it was what the bond houses were supposed to be demanding.

At this time, the county was reported to be \$100 million in the hole. It had spent \$100 million more than it anticipated taking in during 1991. The sales tax increase will, according to projections, raise approximately \$15 million in revenues between its inception on September 1, 1991, and the end of the county's fiscal year, December 31, 1991. But \$15 million doesn't do much for a \$100 million hole. The other gimmicks used, when totaled, do not cover the deficit either. These items only postpone today's payment until tomorrow and there is no assurance that we will be any better off fiscally tomorrow than we are today. It therefore came as a surprise that the county's bond rating was increased back to investment grade. Nothing really changed from our perspective.

We can happen to be within four weeks of the November election. After all the smoke and mirrors and the political games that have been played with Suffolk County's finances, we are cynical. We have a lot less respect for the institutions that rate the security of investments. Investors should practice the old adage, let the buyer beware.

The bond gyrations regarding Suffolk's finances give one pause to think.

And why not?

Voting, jury duty

According to popular belief, the jury pool is pulled from the voter registration lists—but this is only one of multiple sources the Commissioner of Jurors uses to select jurors.

If you drive a car, your name is in the computer. If you own land, your name is in the computer. If your name is on any list that would be considered a well-rounded selection of Suffolk County citizens, your name will end up as a prospective juror.

Failing to register to vote, believing that if you do, you will be called as a juror is faulty thinking. There are so

many other ways that your name can go on that list that to disenfranchise yourself from voting to escape jury service is foolish.

You still have an opportunity to register to vote. If you don't like the laws, or you don't like the politicians, change them. You can only do this if you exercise your right to vote. Stop being conned, be a good citizen, do your part and your country may be able to do something for you.

And why not?

An isle of my own

David Lion Gardiner, the heir to the Gardiner fortune and Gardiners Island, has been known to address audiences by saying, "I have something none of you will ever have, an isle of my own."

Gardiners Island was deeded to the Gardiner family along with a good chunk of Long Island for the services that the Gardiner family provided the King of England.

Legislator Steven Englebright must be affected by these words for he envisions an isle of his own - Robins Island. A few years back, during the time of plenty, Englebright set out to acquire Robins Island, not with his resources but with yours. He calls Robins Island the "Crown Jewel" of the Peconics.

Robins Island has been in private hands for centuries, feverishly guarded against public intrusion. There has been some development on the island with a house, outbuildings and paths cut through the woods. The island is basically a sandbar that separates Little Peconic from Great Peconic. As on the mainland, there are deer, rabbits and birds. The island does not lie over any strategic water supply. The island does not house any great meadows or important wetlands.

The owner of the island had proposed building 28 private homes in a cluster and dedicating 80 percent of the island forever wild. The island would be a special-use district, providing its own ferry, sewage, police and fire protection. It

would be kept private for the exclusive use of the wealthy second-home owners who can afford this luxury. Conservation would take place on 80 percent of the island and the 20 percent that would be clustered development would pay substantial taxes to the school district, the town and the county. A good compromise that would help the economy and satisfy our ecological needs.

The county rejected this common sense approach. Englebright and others, spurred on by the environmental movement, insisted upon all or nothing. The county commissioned \$9 million, plus the bonding costs, to acquire the island. The owner went bankrupt and the county subsequently spent \$500,000 on outside legal fees to try to contest the bankruptcy. The county could have saved this money and spent it on current human needs. This would have meant walking away from its contract and having the opportunity to rethink the acquisition of the island.

Englebright envisions the Island becoming host to over 50,000 school children each year who would tramp over the island looking at the birds and the bees. New paths would have to be cut, sanitary facilities would have to be built. Guards would have to be hired to keep the uninvited public off the island.

Englebright was the architect of the Hampton Hills acquisition, where a developer proposed to donate 1,200 out of the 1,500 acres to the people for the right to develop 300

homes on 180 acres surrounding the golf course. Instead, the county moved to purchase the entire parcel, except the golf course. The cost was \$18 million for the land and an estimated \$62 million for bonding and lost tax revenues that would have gone to the county, the town and the school districts.

Unfortunately, the no compromise stance of the hard-core environmental movement is designed to force its will upon all others. If one dares to stand up and suggest cluster zoning, which blends minimal development with environmental protection, that view is subject to environmental scorn and labeled as "pro-development." Health clinics, prenatal care, and other programs designed to reduce human suffering fall victim to those who want it all their way. The "generations of tomorrow" become more important than the people of today. Human need is replaced by environmental greed.

Unfortunately, the legislature has been made up of too many people like Englebright, whose zealotry is dangerous not only to our pocketbooks, but our quality of life. Their failure to compromise has paralyzed our government and brought one of the richest counties in the country to the point of having its bond rating reduced to junk.

With people out of work and "For Sale" signs the most common denominator in neighborhoods, it is time to change our priorities.

And why not?

Should abortion be the issue?

County Executive Patrick Halpin has made abortion an issue in the Suffolk County Executive's race. Abortion has little to do with the management of county government. Halpin is trying to deflect attention from his mismanagement of our government by bringing this issue into the race.

This ploy has less to do with the abortion issue than it has with winning an election, at any cost. Raising the abortion issue in this campaign is nothing more than political strategy, undoubtedly the product of the minds of Halpin's chief political advisor, Larry Schwartz, and his other hired political "experts." It is a blatant attempt to put together a block of voters to replace the union support Halpin once enjoyed, support that has now turned against him. Unfortunately, many of those pro-choice advocates who have become involved in the Hal-

pin abortion issue are being used for political gain.

His opponents, Bob Gaffney and Bill Kelly, are both pro-life. Halpin claims to be pro-choice. He states he fully supports the law.

Most people believe that the Roe vs. Wade decision permits abortion only in the first trimester. This is a misconception. In the first trimester, Roe vs. Wade leaves the abortion decision to the woman and the judgment of her physician. After that and up to the point of viability (when the fetus can live outside the womb) Roe vs. Wade stipulates the state may regulate the abortion procedure in ways related to maternal health. After viability, the state may regulate abortion except where it is necessary, in appropriate medical judgement, for the preservation of the life or health of the mother.

The demonstrations in Wichita, Kansas, this past summer were cen-

tered around two clinics that pro-lifers claimed were performing abortions right up to the day before a child could be born by natural childbirth.

Many people who are pro-choice can condone abortion during the first trimester, but when asked if abortions should be allowed during the last days of the pregnancy, they are shocked.

Patrick Halpin has tried to paint Bob Gaffney as an extremist for being pro-life. Halpin says he backs the law to its fullest extent. New York State permits abortions after the 26 weeks if the mother's health can be certified to be in danger by a doctor. Health is defined as both physical and mental.

Does Halpin support allowing abortions right up to the end of pregnancy? We would hope not, but if this is the case, isn't that about as extreme as you can get?

The abortion issue should not be part of the Suffolk County Executive's

race; dollars and cents and feeding your family is the issue. Has Halpin run the county efficiently? Could Gaffney or Kelly do better? Are your taxes reasonable, or is it time to think about a change?

Abortion is an important issue, one that affects the emotions of many. Beyond the funding, which Halpin claims is an issue, the abortion decision will not be made by Halpin or the Suffolk County Legislature. Thank God for that. Those who have strong feelings about the issue should direct their attention to those levels of government where the power exists to regulate the matter.

The real issue in Suffolk is survival. The survival of the people who are being driven from their homes, or being forced to do without, in order to survive financially. The use of the abortion issue to draw attention away from that very real problem is, in our view, immoral.

And why not?

Not a shining hour!

After holding the country's attention captive for days, the United States Senate confirmed the appointment of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court. The process which preceded this final vote must be worn as a badge of shame by those who participated in what most observers viewed as "disgusting, sickening, a disgrace."

Virtually everyone agrees that two stories were being told, one true, the other not. But who was not telling the truth? Was it Professor Anita Hill who came forth to describe an alleged list of disgusting comments made some ten years before? Or the nominee, who steadfastly denied any of Hill's charges were true? Who has the wisdom of Solomon to answer that question? We don't. None of the senators involved did. None of the staff members who prodded and coaxed the senators into one action or another knew the entire truth, and neither did those who came forward to speak out on behalf of the principals. Only the two people who were involved, the accuser and the accused, know the full truth.

There were some who attempted to wear this magical crown of wisdom. Several of the senators accepted the word of the accuser without question. Of course, they were opposed to Thomas from the outset, and latched on to this issue as a crutch to bolster their already-made decision.

And Newsday put forth some mind-boggling logic: "...The precise truth of what went on in Clarence Thomas' office, and the exact nature of the relationship between Thomas and Hill, may never be known. But this much is true: something happened."

If we don't know if she's telling the truth when she said something happened, and may never know if his denials are true or not, how in the name of truth can it be concluded that "something happened"? What, pray tell, happened? Was it good? Bad? What?

Having concluded something happened, even though "the precise truth may never be known," Newsday went on to declare: "And that means that

Clarence Thomas, whose entire defense is that nothing happened, lied under oath to Congress--blatantly, repeatedly and with the entire nation watching."

The wisdom of Solomon? Or the stupidity of prejudice? Prejudice against the man not because of the Hill charge, but because of other motives. These words, on the very day of the confirmation vote, were offered not in the sense of fairness but in the spirit of "All's fair in love and war." And this was a war, a war of political and social ideologies. Truth, integrity and fairness are not ingredients in the minds of those who put their own selfish motives above all else.

Nor were truth, integrity or fairness part of the confirmation process, most especially not the final days. It was a circus, one contrived by those who wanted desperately to stop the Thomas nomination in any way possible. According to reports, which have not yet been proven, Professor Hill was first contacted by a Senate committee staff member, and was promised anonymity. An FBI investigation probed the charges and discounted the claims. The report was then leaked to the press. That forced Hill into more active participation at a fully-televised circus instead of closed-door hearings. Those who had participated in the "dig out the dirt" expedition and the leak had achieved their goal. They hid behind the bushes while someone else threw the stones. An absolute low point of the hearings came when John N. Doggett III gave testimony and Senator Metzenbaum attempted to recreate the sexual harassment charge against this witness by using unsubstantiated allegations that had been obtained by his Democratic staffers in a phone conversation.

Here was a citizen coming forward to voluntarily give testimony, only to be met by a sleazy politician using allegations without substance to discredit him.

On the other side of the aisle, Senator Alan Simpson did the same thing, alleging that he had transcripts and faxes questioning Professor Hill's credibility.

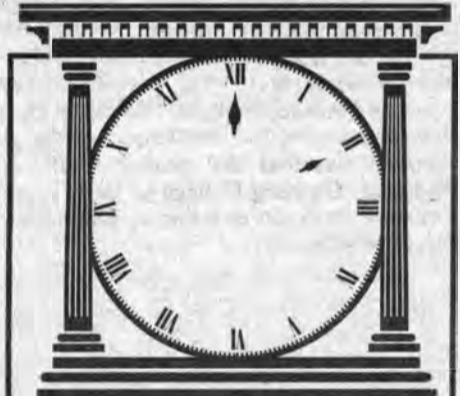
Clarence Thomas was confirmed, ultimately, but his name will be forever tarnished. Professor Hill—who, in the only benefit from this sordid incident, did focus attention on the issue of sexual harassment—will slide back into the obscurity of private life, but he will not be able to do so.

Hopefully, there will be an investigation to determine the responsible party or parties. While "leaks" often lead to the release of important information about governmental wrongdoing, leaked information designed to promote a particular cause has but one purpose: to use the media to achieve that goal. This investigation, and the determination of guilt, cannot be held behind closed doors. There is no longer any trust in many who sit in the U.S. Senate. Citizens are left to ponder the question of what goes on in the Senate that we are not privy to. Is it this bad all the time, or was it the television cameras that made the sleaze ooze out of the gentlemen of the Senate?

Hopefully, the confirmation process will be scrapped, with a fairer way to determine future justices put in its place. How can anyone put any faith at all in those who sat on the panel, on both sides of the aisle? The questions repeated ad nauseam, the clear effort to discredit, to not get at the truth, the spectacle of a man whose own reputation is smeared with charges of womanizing, and even involvement in a young woman's death, crying "Shame" on the floor of the Senate, pointing fingers at others—those who would sit and judge in this fashion should be subject to a confirmation process out of the realm of the political world. Let's dig out the dirt on them and see if they are fit to serve as judge and jury over such an important position.

No, it was not our nation's finest hour. It was a sorry example of the sorry state of an important branch of our government. Now that the hearings are over, we would suggest an immediate effort be made to fumigate the Senate chambers to rid it of the stench that remains.

And why not?



It's time!

Daylight Savings Time comes to an end at 2 a.m. Sunday, October 27. At that hour, it is time to "fall back," or turn the clock back one hour. And it is also time to do another very important task: change the batteries in your smoke detectors.

Turning the clock back will keep you in tune with the rest of the region. Changing the batteries in your smoke detectors could well save your life, and the lives of your loved ones.

Linking the two actions, changing the clock and putting new batteries in smoke alarms, is strongly recommended in hopes that it becomes an automatic action. There are ample reminders about the time change, but too few about changing smoke alarm batteries. Link the two, change the time and the batteries! Far better to discard, or use in another fashion, a battery which still has life, than to lose the life of someone you love because you didn't.

If you don't have smoke detectors in your home, please get one, or two, or however many it takes to offer complete protection. They could be the soundest investments you will ever make!

And why not?