

Personal greed versus integrity

Labor Day not only marks the unofficial demise of summer, but also the start of the political season. Politicians begin in earnest their efforts to gain voter support. And the special interest groups start flooding the mail, phone lines, and airways with the pay-back for favors rendered.

One such group, the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), has already released its list of endorsed candidates for state office. "A NYSUT endorsement is valued highly," according to NYSUT Executive Vice-President Herb Magidson. "Candidates know it brings not only our considerable reputation and influence, but also the possibility of financial

and campaign-worker assistance. The people we endorse usually win." NYSUT's endorsement process, he said, "...places emphasis on incumbents' voting records. Generally, we support those elected officials whose votes reflect our members' best interests on bills we consider important to education, labor and health care..."

Unfortunately, the votes in the best interests of the NYSUT's membership is rarely in the best interests of the taxpayer. A case in point: NYSUT recently used its lobbying muscle to push for legislation which would require school districts to pay the full cost of health insurance for retired teachers. That political pressure was

successful because the proposal was approved in both the assembly and senate, much to the dismay of school districts and boards of education, who warned about a dire fiscal impact. The financial threat ended when Governor Mario Cuomo vetoed the measure.

Interestingly, only two of Suffolk's state representatives, Senator Kenneth LaValle and Assemblyman Thomas Barraga, voted against the measure. In the list of NYSUT endorsements, LaValle was endorsed, Barraga wasn't. Barraga's cardinal sin, apparently, was that he not only voted against the measure, he rose on the floor of the assembly to debate against the proposal.

Residents of the Seventh Assembly District, which Barraga represents, should not be surprised if the NYSUT tries to punish Barraga with campaign help for his opponent, although NYSUT did not endorse anyone in this district. It's our guess they might try to apply enough pressure to force Barraga into line, to vote the NYSUT position.

From now until Election Day, the political action committees will be very active, trying to fill the Albany seats with friendly legislators who, they expect, would show their appreciation with favorable votes. We urge the voters to view those endorsements, phone calls and campaign flyers carefully. You may be voting against your own pocketbook if you fall for such political rhetoric.

In our view, Barraga is to be commended for taking a stand against putting another financial burden on the shoulders of the hard-pressed taxpayers. NYSUT's retaliation could well be entitled Greed vs. Integrity. According to Barraga, the educational lobby had a very good year, winning on a number of issues which they pushed.

While they were successful in buying the votes of most legislators, in this instance LaValle and Barraga, and Governor Cuomo, deserve the gratitude of the taxpayers for their courage. Barraga has earned special applause for going that extra step, debating against the bill. They did what they believed to be in the best interests of those they represent.

While those actions may have earned the anger of NYSUT, they deserve appreciative praise from those who would have to foot the bill.

And why not?

Paying for the past

During the Vietnam War and the days after, it was popular for the liberals to attack the military establishment of the United States. Congressmen and senators thwarted the administration, which was trying to keep America ready, at every turn.

The events of the past few weeks have proved the folly of this way of thinking. All our energies have been concentrated on defending ourselves from Russia. We now have come to realize that even small nations can be a threat to this country.

We are amazed and proud that

America has been able to respond as quickly and emphatically as it has in the Middle East. We are left, however, wondering whether our troops have the best equipment, the modern weaponry needed for desert war, where the enemy has threatened to use chemical warfare as a weapon.

We wonder what those senators and congressmen are now thinking, those who voted against research and development projects under the guise that we had to cut back on American military might.

We pray to God a peaceful so-

lution can be found in the Middle East, that triggers are not pulled and our men and women are not asked to die. If we get out of this situation with the hides on our backs, we should learn from this lesson. Be prepared and be prepared right for any situation that may evolve in the future.

The world will always be inhabited by mad men. They will have armies and arsenals and they very well may not subscribe to the same morals, ethics and philosophies we govern ourselves by. We should always be prepared.

And why not?

Point of view

Blame it on their youth--or on us?

By Jack Ellsworth, president, WLIM

"I don't get no respect!" That's Rodney Dangerfield's lament. While he may be kidding, a lack of respect for their elders from today's generation is an all too frequent complaint from parents, teachers and many other adults.

When I was growing up my love and respect for my parents knew no bounds. Teachers were looked up to—even feared if they were unusually strict—but always respected. And the clergy was revered and held in high esteem. Today religion has no place in the lives of so many young people. A study of the five top denominations in the National Council of Churches shows that their membership decline over the past 20 years is the equivalent of closing down a 700-member congregation every day for 15 years. But not attending church is only a small part of a growing problem. Profanity, rudeness and outright arrogance in their daily lives constitute much of the behavior of too many of the current younger generation.

Where have we gone wrong? Why is so much flagrant disrespect permitted in our homes, in schools and on the streets? Is it because we older adults are too apathetic?

My contemporaries and I owe so much to our parents, to our teachers and to so many wonderful caring adults who guided and directed our lives as we were growing up. But then it was a different world.

There are many negative influences on today's young people. And the media plays an important part. Don't tell me that kids don't listen to the lyrics of what they call popular music.

Prince sings of brutally taking a girl's virginity. A heavy metal group called Guns and Roses spouts four letter words on national TV and spews hatred of minorities in their performances. Public Enemy touts anti-Semitism and Sam Kinison talks of killing Iranian kids.

Andrew Dice Clay is the latest horror. His act on cable TV and at college campus concerts is filled with talk of assaults on women, touting sexual depravity and attacks on immigrants, gays and minorities.

The incredibly popular Madonna, whose name is a misnomer for someone so unchaste, reaches new lows in taste as she prances, writhes, grinds and twists around on the stage in bizarre revealing costumes that enhance her grossly blatant sexual songs and routines.

Remember all the talk in the 60s about "comedian" George Carlin and the seven words you "couldn't say" on TV? On a recent cable TV program taped in an auditorium filled mostly with high school and college students, he not only repeated many of the formerly forbidden vile words but added others as bad or worse. The kids laughed and applauded wildly. He also made jokes about defecation, rape and cancer, surely among the unfunniest subjects imaginable. After the show a 35-year-old friend of mine remarked, "This guy is really sick! I could only watch for about five minutes."

There is actually a rock group called "The Dead Kennedys" and the title of one of their recent albums—(how do I word this for a family publication)—refers to their inability to function sexually due to inebriation.

On New York City radio Howard Stern tells about tak-

ing pictures of his wife's miscarriage. His legion of listeners typically find this kind of material hilarious.

A recent news story reports that for the first time in memory the youth of America is in worse physical condition than their elders. And now over one million teenage girls become pregnant every year. And how about our youths' mental health?

Negative influences on the young are everywhere, but none, I feel, more damaging than the ear-shattering music and other so-called entertainment that pounds in their brains day and night.

In Dr. Allan Bloom's highly acclaimed book, "The Closing of the American Mind," published by Simon and Schuster, Dr. Bloom speaks of the enormous impression rock music makes upon teenagers. He writes, "Never was there an art form directed so exclusively to children. The words implicitly and explicitly describe bodily acts that satisfy sexual desire and treat them as its only natural and routine culmination for children who do not yet have the slightest imagination of love, marriage or family. Picture a 13-year-old boy sitting home doing his math assignment while wearing his Walkman headphones or watching MTV—he is provided with comfort and leisure by the most productive economy ever known to mankind. Science has penetrated the secrets of nature in order to provide him with the marvelous, lifelike electronic sound and image reproduction he is enjoying. And in what does progress culminate? A pubescent child whose body throbs with orgasmic rhythms; whose feelings are made inarticulate in hymns to the joys of

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Volunteers and mercenaries

There are in today's world those who volunteer their time to help others, expecting no financial reward in return. And there are those who will do nothing unless there is self reward, financial or otherwise, to pay for their deeds. If there were more of the first group, the volunteers, and less of the second, the mercenaries, this world would be a far better place.

The difference between the two groups was clearly illustrated recently in a Babylon Town incident. Volunteers from the county's Youth Conservation Crews were slated to begin removing old tires, shopping carts, garbage and other debris from Strongs Creek, which winds its way through the southwest sector of Lindenhurst. Those volunteers were prevented from doing the cleanup, however, because, by law, permission had to first be obtained from the bargaining unit where the project is scheduled. But the union which represents 80 Lindenhurst Village employees, including its highway and sanitation workers, refused that permission. Explaining that action, the head of the Lindenhurst unit said: "We're down a driver and three men in the highway department and they (village officials) continue to give contract work to outside people. It's a question of protecting our jobs and the taxpayers."

So what? The lack of manpower and contracting with outside people has nothing to do with permitting volunteers to clean out a stream. How does stopping the volunteer effort help the taxpayers? How does it impact on the jobs? It doesn't, in either case. It's nothing more than blackmail to benefit the union's cause.

Another example can be found in the Longwood School District, which is in the throes of a financial crisis. Taxpayers are facing a 32.2 percent increase in their tax rate which is going up from \$61.478 to \$81.26 per each \$100 of assessed valuation. It is not surprising that voters have rejected the budget, and rejected the

budget and separate propositions for transportation and sports in a second vote.

Citing severe safety dangers along district roads, the transportation proposal was put before the voters in a third vote. The proposition was approved by a scant 27 votes, adding more to the austerity tax rate increase which was, incidentally, higher than the original projected increase because of "an increase in insurance costs."

Interestingly, the austerity budget includes \$379,000 for coaches' salaries, even though sports are excluded in an austerity budget. This was done, District Principal Nick Muto explained, "in case residents in the district raise enough money to finance a sports activity, the coaches' salaries would be available."

Why, we wondered, couldn't the district use that \$379,000 to ensure the safety of the children? Why couldn't those funds be utilized to finance the extra busing to ensure the children's safety without adding an extra burden on an already overburdened taxpayer?

Members of the athletic staff distributed flyers throughout the community extolling the importance of athletics for students who may miss out on scholarship opportunities if denied an opportunity to participate. Why, we asked a district official, can't the coaches, if they truly believe what they say, volunteer some time or, at the least, work for a little less, so that the students can be safe and have sports too?

If a fire occurs at a school, or at a coach's house, volunteer firemen will respond. If a teacher, or administrator, or a coach, or student is injured or sick and requires medical attention, a volunteer ambulance company will respond. Why can't there be volunteerism at the schools to give the kids those things which are important? Why can't teachers, who are certainly not underpaid, volunteer some time for the extracurricular activities which

educators claim are very important? Aren't there any dedicated educators who will look beyond the financial reward to benefit the students? Especially in a district where the tax rate has gone up at a sickening rate?

Dedication is a word that is often overused. It is a word, however, that clearly applies to volunteers, who give of their time without question, without pay. It certainly does not apply to mercenaries, who give of their time only if there is a financial reward in return.

It's time to take a good look at what's happening. Time to tell those who keep asking the taxpayers to pay for this and to pay for that, declaring they are depriving the kids if they don't, to put their own actions in front of their selfish motives. Why can't the teachers' union step forward, declare that they understand the financial plight of the district and will pitch in to help lessen the impact on the students?

And why not?

It's Illegal To Die

We never thought we would see the day that it became illegal for fish to die in Southampton Town waters without making provisions for the disposal of their carcasses on land.

Southampton Town, following the lead of East Hampton, has made it illegal for carcasses or fish parts to be returned to the waters in these ultrarich communities. We understand the regulation has something to do with the environmentalist movement.

We wonder what the seagulls have to say about this. How many seagulls will cry out in hunger for their natural meal which has been taken from them? How many crabs and eels are going to their nautical bed hungry because man thought he knew more than Mother Nature? What makes man think he can change the environment without upsetting the old lady?

As a boy, I was proud to call myself a conservationist. What comes from the land and the sea should be returned to it. Fish and game could be harvested and, given the right balance, replenish itself. Protect it, but don't fool with it. So much for common sense.

This bit of idiocy is coupled with a new regulation from the Department of Environmental Conservation which forbids natural fertilizer to be used where food crops are grown. Again,

being brought up in the day and age of conservation, I saw first-hand the results of good, old-fashioned cow and horse manure tilled into the garden. No chemicals, no man-made products from oil, just good, old-fashioned manure. Tomatoes the size of cantaloupes and bushels upon bushels of beans. Corn that grew robustly and produced ears upon ears of luscious kernels.

Now it is against the environment to use these natural by-products. If you want your food crops to grow, use petro-chemicals and other man-made stimulants. Can anybody explain this reasoning? What are we to do, diaper all the deer?

While they're at it, maybe they can come up with an idea to save the environment from the effects of the methane gas produced by cows. Don't the save-the-earth people realize that every cow belches methane gas 350 times a day? Can't you imagine what that is doing to the ozone layer? We should immediately develop a methane gas recovery system for each cow, or eliminate all offending cows.

Maybe we can come up with a chemical by-product that will taste and look like milk, but is made from imported oil. Holy Cow! Think of the profits!

And why not?

Point of view:

Politicians and the budget crisis

By Lou Grasso

Suffolk County taxpayers are being belted by high taxes from all levels. The problems of huge deficits on the federal level are well-known. State lawmakers have run state government into bankruptcy. County officials have produced huge tax rate hikes which spawned a tax revolt. School taxes are driving residents from their homes, and town governments are hardly examples of sound, efficient operations.

One of the problems on all levels is politics. Politicians run for public office vowing to bring spending under control, to cut taxes. In most cases they then become involved in

political games, load the payrolls with faithful party workers, create new positions for defeated politicians in what has become a very costly political welfare program. Those spending cuts that are made come out of the hides of the people in the form of reduced services and the elimination of people programs, and the implementation of "user fees." And all the while they cater to special interest groups, bartering taxpayer dollars for votes.

Suffolk County Executive Patrick Halpin, in a prime example of political arrogance, held a very secret, exclusively for Democrats, meeting recently to detail some drastic budget news and proposed budget cuts which would decimate services and

programs. Security was tight at this super secret session, documents distributed by Halpin aides were reportedly numbered and taken back after the meeting.

Halpin told his fellow Democrats that things are indeed very bleak. New budget shortfalls are ahead, and layoffs of up to 680 county employees, elimination of police services, keeping a brand new jail closed to save on costs, and cuts in health and welfare programs loom.

The pros and cons of these proposals will be spotlighted in the news in weeks ahead. But the method in which Halpin put forth these proposals deserves immediate comment. The Democrats are not in control of county government, although they must

shoulder a large measure of the responsibility for the financial dilemma they have put the county in. In meeting only with the Democrats, Halpin is playing political games, hoping to stir up some support for his Band-Aid measures to repair the gaping wound through which finances are pouring out. He really isn't concerned about the county's health, or the people who will be impacted by his planned actions. He is trying desperately to come up with ways to make it appear he is keeping a pledge that he would not raise taxes.

If Halpin thinks the public will be fooled by drastic budget cuts in people-oriented areas while the political patronage system in

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Houses we can afford to buy, keep

A few years back you could not touch a house for under \$150,000. A glance at today's classified section indicates buyers of homes under \$150,000, and even under \$100,000, have a good selection to choose from. It no longer is a question of the price of the house, but whether the buyer can afford the taxes. As new buyers are faced with this question, many current homeowners are faced with another question: "Can I afford to stay in my home with the insatiable demands by government which are passed on in the form of real estate taxes?"

Real estate values have fallen drastically over the last two years. Deep discounts of 30 to 50 percent have affected homes Island-wide. It appeared that the rich would be

spared. But recently we saw ads in the Hamptons for homes once priced between \$1 million and \$1.5 million now being offered at \$400,000 and \$750,000.

We are in a period of rapid deflation in most segments of our economy. Wall Street and the financial world were first hit after the October crash of 1987. Thousands of high priced jobs disappeared. Financial houses, consultants and legal firms to the financial world not only slashed staff, but were forced to reduce fees. This has worked down all the way to the tradespeople. Skilled laborers who were commanding \$25 to \$30 per hour are, today, looking for work at \$15 per hour.

The one segment that has not come down is the cost of government.

Our politicians are paying lip service, but still being political. They dream that the taxpayer can find something else to give up so they can maintain the size of government and its cost. Whether they be school board members, town boards, or elected county officials, they are living in a fool's paradise, a dream world.

When this year's tax increases hit the homeowners, all hell will break loose. Because of Cuomo's mandated solution to garbage, most towns will have to double town taxes. Some towns will try to hide this increase by establishing garbage districts, but when the cost of garbage districts is added to the town taxes, the homeowners will pay twice the cost of government in real estate taxes.

County Executive Halpin and the legislature, instead of working as a team to overcome the crisis, have squandered the last two years in counterproductive politics. Their mission was quite simple, because of the lucrative wage increases granted county employees going back to the Cohalan years, they had to cut staff or raise taxes. They refused to cut staff, partic-

ularly administrative staff. Instead, they have chosen to pick the most people-sensitive projects as their only alternative. Reductions in these people-sensitive areas, however, create the largest howls, offering the politicians an opportunity to claim the people want the continuation of services so their only alternative is to raise taxes.

1991 will be the year of the reaper. More long-term homeowners will be forced to give up. Fewer newcomers will buy because they will not be able to afford the taxes or the cost of energy. Politicians will have narrowed their electives to the point they will have to use a meat axe instead of a pruning shear to cut back the cost of government.

There is still time to make living on Long Island affordable, but politics has to be put aside and courage has to be displayed. We have to dare to be different. The question that will be answered in the days ahead is, "Will the politicians who have created the financial crisis have the common sense to do what has to be done to resolve it without adding to the taxpayers' burden?"

And why not?

Election '90

We have already started our election coverage. Our reporting staff is being assigned to cover the backgrounds, track records, and campaign stands of candidates seeking state and federal offices. Profiles and glimpses into the individual will start to appear, informing the voters who these candidates are as people, and the issues they are speaking out on.

Along with routine coverage, our editorial board will individually interview each candidate for office. We will be seeking truth and honesty. We want to know where the candidates stand, and what reasoning powers brought them to the positions they have taken. We will probe their identification of problems facing the constituents and, more importantly, their proposed solutions.

Once again, this year, all candidates for legislative positions will be asked to indicate their position on over 100 issues. The questions and their answers as well as those of their opponents will be published between October 17 and October 24 in *Suffolk Life*.

On October 31, we will announce the candidates our editorial board has chosen to endorse. Those making the selection are the publisher, the managing editor, our city and copy editors and the individual reporters who have covered the races. Each of us, jury

style, will point out what we perceive are the strong points and the weaknesses of each candidate. We will select the candidate we will endorse by consensus.

If any member of the board is strongly opposed to the consensus endorsement, that individual has an opportunity to present an opposing viewpoint. This privilege has been exercised in the past, but usually we are able to reach a solid consensus even though we come from different philosophies and beliefs.

All of us are dedicated to an effort to find the best qualified candidate to serve the people. Of critical concern is the candidates' honesty and believability.

This is a long, tiresome procedure, but we do believe it is one of the best efforts made by any newspaper to give those who will be running our government maximum exposure, and the voters an objective look at the candidates.

Remember, in November you can make a difference, particularly if you are educated and informed about the issues and the candidates. We'll do our best to keep you informed. It's your responsibility to make the ultimate choice.

And why not?

Limit the terms

This November we hold elections for Congress, State Senate and Assembly, as well as for Governor, Comptroller, Attorney General and some local county office holders, county clerk and comptroller.

If history repeats itself, better than 90 percent of the incumbent Congressmen and Assemblymen will be returned to office. The voters, by sending them back, are not saying, "Hey guys, you have done a good job, you deserve to be continued." It will be a matter of name recognition, and constituent service the incumbent has been able to perform for the district, paid for, of course, by the taxpayers.

Too many good citizens who are registered will either forget to vote, or will be called away from home and fail to vote by absentee ballot. The result is the incumbents will be re-elected and will go on sticking it to us. They will raise taxes and blame it on the other guy. They will impose regulations and say they have no control over it. They will enhance their

wealth, increase their salaries, knowing you will not react against them. They will build empires. They are safe and secure in knowing that incumbents can have lifetime employment if they do nothing but go along and get along.

It's interesting to note that in Oklahoma and California, where the voters have an Initiative and Referendum mechanism to put initiatives on the ballot, they will decide this year on limiting the terms their elected representatives can serve. This will stop empire building and make representatives more responsive to the public. It will strip away the insulation, for it ends lifetime employment.

This year, when your state and congressional candidates make their semi-annual visit to your community, find out their feelings, pin them down, and let them know you want a change in government and you want it now.

And why not?

Point of view

Meet each new day with moral intensity

By Rabbi Richard N. Smith
Congregation Beth Shalom

Most of our actions are performed routinely or with little overall assessment. Often we do whatever we like without holding ourselves to strict accountability. For how much harm can one little act do?

One of the most profound teachings of the Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur holiday is the cosmic significance of every single act. The underlying theme of the High Holy Day season is that of a trial. Not only every individual, but humanity is

judged by God as to whether they are, on balance, guilty or innocent, good or bad. In the traditional imagery, if there is more good than bad, then the world—and the individual—is judged for life. This concept makes us aware of the tremendous impact of every deed.

No act is too trivial. The Talmud (a compendium of interpreting Jewish tradition by our ancient sages) tells of acts "for which there is no measure. There can be no act too large or too small." Crucial among these are "acts of loving kindness." Sometimes an encouraging smile given at the right time can change another person's life.

The sound of the shofar at the High Holy Days is meant to cut through the web of routine; to wake up, to get us to take ourselves and our actions as seriously as they deserve. One more cigarette—what difference does it make? Buckling up a seat belt for a short trip—why bother?

A Talmudic rabbi suggested that we should live every day with the same moral intensity as if it were our last. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur teach us that we should do every act as if our life depended on it, because—in fact—ours or someone else's does.

Why is John Doe above the law?

John Doe is the fictitious name usually used in referring to an unknown person or, for whatever reason, is deliberately unidentified. John Doe last week was the subject of a Grand Jury report. That same Grand Jury had been convened to probe charges about the actions of Suffolk County Water Authority Chairman L. Campo.

According to the Grand Jury report, John Doe charged his full-time employer, a public entity, for mileage expenses incurred while he was using a Suffolk County Water Authority car for business. But, the report notes: "John Doe did not reimburse the Suffolk County Authority for the monies that he was given by his full time employer."

John Doe just put the dough in his pocket. Where I come from, that's keeping money that doesn't belong to

you, and if you or I did it we would end up facing the judge.

The report also revealed that John Doe tried to persuade an employee of one of the public trusts he worked for to falsify records to give false information to a financial institution. Here's how the Grand Jury report detailed this incident: "On April 17, 1990, John Doe took another employee to the John Peel Room for lunch and paid for the meal by charging it to the Suffolk County Authority house account. The purpose of the lunch was to ask the employee to falsify the employment verification papers of a third employee, reflecting that he made a higher salary than he in fact did."

"John Doe told the employee that the false statement would assist the third employee in buying property in Pennsylvania. The second employee

confronted the third employee and told him he could not falsify documents.

"The third employee told the second employee that the property in question was actually John Doe's property. Although John Doe jointly owns the property with his wife, she did not want her husband to sell it."

"John Doe," the report continues, "was trying to sell the property to his old friend in order to hide his assets."

John Doe, the report reveals, used the Authority car to commute to his full-time job in Nassau County, used it from 1987 to 1988 on trips out of state for personal reasons on approximately six occasions, and used it to go on vacation from April 7 to April 16, 1990. In addition, John Doe used an Authority American Express credit card for personal use, did not document expenses as other board members did, and never complied with a request by the finance officer that he do so, the Grand Jury found.

Yet, with all of this, the Grand Jury did not return an indictment. Astounding!

The actions of John Doe which are contained in the Grand Jury report go much further than questioning the ethics and integrity of someone entrusted with a responsible position. They go right to the heart of using money that should go toward improvement of the Authority's service to its ratepayers, providing service to areas of Suffolk County that are currently dealing with contaminated water. Many county residents have been forced to buy bottled water because their own wells are contaminated, and they can't afford the cost of having water mains extended to their neighborhoods. And all the while, John Doe is dining and using his Authority car for vacation trips.

Instead of using Authority dollars to improve its system to better serve the ratepayers, to keep rates low instead of increasing them, to install filters on Authority wells that have water problems, the Authority board members launched a "Suffolk County Water Authority Challenge Grant" and gave Suffolk County \$1 million to

cover costs related to the county's Drinking Water Protection Program. Interestingly, \$250,000 of that money was earmarked by the county executive to establish a Suffolk County Parks Master Plan. How that plan protects the water has not been made clear. And how many residents could have been relieved of water problems with those funds can only be imagined.

The Authority chairman and two of his allies have approved spending Authority dollars for legal fees to protect them from the actions of the Suffolk County Legislature, which has launched an investigation into the goings-on at the Authority. Some predict those fees will hit \$175,000 before the sordid, sorry matter is resolved. More dollars that could be used to help people are being diverted for selfish, personal reasons.

We hear every day we must protect our water, we must buy more land, must stop all development, must spend more tax dollars to protect our water. And yet, while taxes soar out of sight, and people can't afford to live here anymore, we have this example of a bureaucratic nightmare.

We don't know what was in the heads of the Grand Jury. We don't know why the Grand Jury did not consider the use of an Authority car and credit card for personal gain to be a misuse of ratepayers' dollars. But we do know that many people have gone to jail for a lot less.

It has to stop. Now! If it means state action to abolish the Suffolk County Water Authority so that we can start anew, establish another agency with enough safeguards built in to prevent this from happening, that must be done. If it means taking any action—legal or legislative—to clean that Authority of the slime that now covers it, it must be done.

Those who are involved, and those who act to continue this affront to the people of Suffolk County who are paying the water bills, should resign. Immediately. Since we don't expect they will have the decency to do so, we must, by any and every means possible, remove them from power.

And why not?

Why a salt water fishing license?

One of the few pleasures in life that is untaxed and not licensed is the ability to fish in salt waters.

Governor Cuomo's DEC wants to end this tradition. They have been pushing for a salt water license as another means of taxation. The notion of a state-issued salt water license is ludicrous. Salt water fish are migratory. They do not know state boundaries, and neither do many salt water fishermen who pursue these fish from state to state.

A salt water fishing license is nothing more than another scheme to tax the public. The DEC will tell you they will use the funds to regulate the fisheries, but in reality they have no power over these fish except when they come into state waters. If New York State passes a salt water fishing license law, other states will probably follow suit, which will make for a

nightmare for fishermen who will have to have multi-state licenses to pursue their recreational activity.

If licensing was needed for legitimate purposes, we could see one national license being issued, one that would be good in any one of our 50 states. The federal government already is regulating most fish, and their management councils are adopting measures concerning conditions and sizes of fish which may be taken. If the state attempts to duplicate these efforts, it will be just one more mindless waste of taxpayers' funds. The additional regulations will strike at the heart of the freedom a fisherman feels.

Governor Cuomo's DEC should give up this ill-conceived idea and let something in life be free.

And why not?

A point of view:

A good decision on a bad practice

By Lou Grasso

Supreme Court Judge James Cowan recently ruled unconstitutional a section of Brookhaven Town ordinance that permitted the town board to dispense with giving personal notification to property owners whose property is to be upzoned by the town. Judge Cowan's action should be applauded by all who believe in fair play.

The issue before Judge Gowan was twofold: One, Brookhaven's ordinance stipulates notice is to be given to "such owner at the address shown on the current Brookhaven town assessment roll," and the clause which permitted the board to dispense with personal notification. On the first, Judge Cowan noted in his decision, "...this court perceives no reason why, with a modicum of ease, the town could not verify the identity of the property owners shown on the assessment roll with the deeds duly recorded in the office of the Suffolk County Clerk prior to sending notice of the change of use district classification. Such a procedure would be neither time-consuming nor unduly burdensome

and would insure that actual notice be given in accordance with principles of due process of law..."

Judge Gowan's decision also notes: "Finally, to the extent that Section 85-23 (C) allows the town board to dispense with the notice requirements of Section 85-23, it constitutes an unconstitutional deprivation of due process of law." In declaring that section unconstitutional, the judge noted: "It is not so much as to whether the town board has accorded due process that is in issue, but how much process is due."

Instead of personal notification, in many instances the town has placed legal notices in newspapers to satisfy the notification process. While legal notices are a means of informing the public, they should not take the place of personal notification of those who would be impacted by any proposed action. The New York State Court of Appeals, in declaring that the former real estate tax collection enforcement provisions of the Nassau County Administrative Code, which failed to provide property owners with actual notice of tax lien sales, violated the constitutional guarantee of due process of law. The Court concluded: "...where the interest

of a property owner will be substantially affected by an act of government, and where the owner's name and address are known, due process requires that actual notice be given."

The town, based on concerns the decision could impact on a large number of upzones throughout the town in the past, has vowed to appeal the decision. We hope, and believe, Judge Gowan's decision will be upheld. We think the town appeal is a waste of taxpayers' dollars that should be put to better use.

Giving any governmental officials or municipality an opportunity to bypass full notification prior to acting is treading on mighty dangerous grounds. Think of the ramifications. Are you willing to give officials an opportunity to try to slip something affecting your property through without giving you personal notification? Are you willing to gamble your property, or your home, on the hopes you will happen to see a published legal notice? Do you read every legal notice in every newspaper?

Legal notices serve an important purpose. They guarantee public notification for a host of important actions. But they should never take the place of personal notification.