

# Peace does have its cost

As a young man I well remember awakening at night with a recurrent, horrible nightmare. I was in a bombed-out cellar tangled in a spider's web. I could hear the sound of boots coming toward me. In the background there were bombs and the sounds of war. These dreams took place during the second World War. I eventually grew out of them, but the fear that often awakened me was ever present and very real.

America ended World War II with the dropping of an atom bomb on Japan. In the years to come, I took part in scheduled air raid drills and trembled when the sirens went off. The atomic age brought projections of widespread destruction and the real knowledge that not only the United States, but a number of foreign countries had atomic capabilities.

When I married, I considered not having children. I felt it might be selfish

to bring them into a world that could be blown up at any second.

Over the years, as we honored our war dead on Memorial Day, we were ever aware that although there was relative calm around the world, if someone blinked, World War III could be started. The only deterrent was the realization of leaders that both the Soviet Union and the United States were equally capable of destroying each other and the rest of the world in their quest for dominance.

When Ronald Reagan was elected President, few placed any hope in his ability to make peace with the Russians. Publicly he appeared to be as militant as the Communist leaders. Whether the result of prayer, circumstances, or the realization of how close we were to destruction, Reagan made tremendous inroads in bridging the wall between the United States and Russia.

Arms agreements were signed which

started a dismantling on both sides of our war machines. Utilizing this foundation, it was not surprising that President George Bush was able to finally sign meaningful peace treaties.

During President Bush's term of office, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics came unraveled, the Berlin Wall came down, and worldwide peace appeared to be a reality.

Peace does have its cost. Russia's economy is in ruins because of the collapse of military control. They are starting to make plows instead of tanks. This condition has led to a collapse of their currency, and brought economic chaos. Governmentally they are emerging from a socialistic to a capitalistic economy.

In the United States, the same effects are being felt. Here on Long Island, 22 percent of our economy was directly or indirectly tied to the country's de-

fense efforts. As companies are getting out of the defense business, employees are being laid off and support businesses are being closed down.

Nightmares today are not about atomic bombs exploding above our heads, but our ability to put food into our family's stomachs. As soon as peace became evident, liberals, such as New York Governor Mario Cuomo, started talking about the peace dividend and how the money that was raised to support the war effort could be transferred into governmentally-run social programs. These programs service only a small percentage of the population. They do not create widespread employment and have a tendency to make a select few wealthy at the expense of everyone.

Peace has had its price, our economy has suffered. Wages are no longer increasing, profits have fallen. We doubt we will ever return to the glory days of the 80's and conspicuous consumption which, in itself, fed the economy.

The so-called peace dividend should be used to encourage a strong industrial, manufacturing base. The money should be used to rebuild our once dominant defense industry into worldwide consumer products. The reduced cost of our military involvement should be fed back to the consumers in reductions in taxes so that they will have the ability to pump new life into the economy through their purchases. The peace dividend should be used to rebuild our roads and bridges, putting our construction people back to work while improving our transportation system.

If we waste our precious resources on testing social programs, we will heighten our economic demise and leave fewer to pay for more demands. We must not let that happen.

And why not?

# Speaking of ethics

The Brookhaven Town Board recently revealed a new ethics standard for all elected officials and the majority of appointed personnel. We commend the board for this action, for it puts some teeth into the existing law and spells out very carefully the ethical behavior of the public's servants.

We were disappointed, however, that no mention was made of the town doing business with the families of officials. John LaMura is the supervisor of Brookhaven Town. His father-in-law is Tom Nepell. Tom owns a major insurance agency in the town and is a major insurer of the town. This insurance is

given to him without bid. This is not ethical. If the town's insurance was put out to bid, substantial savings could possibly be realized.

LaMura had indicated, when he was running for election, that if successful he would put the insurance out to bid. He has not. Is LaMura's commitment to his father-in-law more important than his commitment to the people of Brookhaven?

We are not talking about peanuts. The total of the town's insurance is between \$3 million and \$5 million. Commissions could exceed a half-million dollars.

A few years back, Suffolk Life took

its own advice and put its insurance out to bid after having been with a friend for more than 30 years. We cut our insurance costs by 50 percent. It's surprising what a little competition will do.

Can Brookhaven residents save a couple of million dollars on their cost of insurance? Possibly, but we will never know unless John LaMura shows some courage and demonstrates some ethics by putting the town's insurance out to bid.

Where LaMura established ethical behavior for all the employees of the town, shouldn't he practice what he preaches?

And why not?

## Point of view:

# Family values, the true meaning

By Lou Grasso

The buzz words of Campaign 92's presidential contest would appear to be "family values." Those words mean different things to different people. But the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew, which devastated parts of Florida and Louisiana, has produced some true examples of family values that should set an example for the political rhetoric we're hearing.

One local Suffolk family could well be the role model of what family values are all about. Most members of that family live on Long Island, but one segment of the Testa family lives in Homestead, Florida, an area devastated by the violent storm. That Florida brother and his family did not escape the devastation Hurricane Andrew brought. Their home was destroyed. The roof blew off, and the second story collapsed down on the first floor. He and his wife had huddled in a closet while their home was collapsing around them.

The home of his recently married daughter was also destroyed. And his avocado orchard was demolished. But while he had lost much of the material things in his life, he was fortunate that he and his family escaped injury. They were alive. And they had a family who truly exhibits the real meaning of family values.

Once the Testa family members here learned of their Florida kin's dilemma, they began to plan and to act. Many phone calls produced their plan of action. Since many of the Testas are involved in construction, their mission was simple. They would go to Florida to help rebuild the home. One group was scheduled to leave last Wednesday evening, tak-

ing along food, water, clothing, and other necessary items. They would drive through the night for a reunion with their Florida kin, assess the problem, and help protect the property from the looters who frequently appeared.

A second group would leave the next day, with necessary construction equipment, generators they had purchased and building materials. They would make contact while enroute, and would purchase additional necessary building materials which would undoubtedly be in short supply in the area of devastation.

Still another group purchased and prepared food to sustain those involved in the restoration effort. They purchased a large supply of life's needed items for their Florida kin, and would stay here to deal with the family requirements here on Long Island. Together, as a family unit, they would shoulder the task of bringing life back to normal for their Florida kin.

Family, according to Webster, includes "persons of common ancestry" and a "group living together." While we in this nation may come from different lands, and have different ancestry, we are all Americans, and we live together in a great nation. Therefore, we are all members of the family of Americans. Like the local folks with Florida kin, we must be concerned about the plight of our fellow family members who live in the devastated areas of Florida and Louisiana.

The visual reports of the devastation of storm-hit areas clearly show the task of restoration is monumental, far beyond the ability of those local areas to adequately handle. There are immediate needs, such as water, food and temporary shelter. And long-term problems, restoration of permanent housing, jobs, hope for the future.

The logistical problems of dealing with the clean-up

and restoration efforts are many. But so were the complex difficulties of coping with the logistics of transporting personnel, equipment and supplies in Operation Storm.

President George Bush, who has made "family values" a key part of his campaign for re-election, traveled to both devastated areas to give moral support and the pledge of federal dollars to help in the restoration effort. That's good, but not enough. President Bush, as the "head" of our family unit of Americans, must do much more.

He must form a team of experts to work together with local officials to deal with the restoration efforts. Those who handled the logistical problems of transporting Operation Desert Storm materials should deal with the logistics of providing the immediate and future vital necessities and material needs of the impacted areas. Airlifts of supplies into the Miami area and convoys of trucks with needed items should be an easier task than supplying an army in a far off land.

We must put aside the red tape that needlessly delays the distribution of vital dollars and supplies for those who are innocent victims of nature's wrath. Provide the needed help first, streamline the process, then worry about the insanity of protocol and red tape.

How many modular and mobile homes are either in inventory or in the construction process in our land? How can they be transported to the devastated areas in the shortest possible time? Can this production be accelerated to handle the need?

What military personnel are available to assist in the clean-up efforts? How can we put together enough structural engineers to assess those damaged homes that can be re-

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# Pull the plug on Holtsville haste

The infamous deal negotiated by Governor Mario Cuomo, his representatives and the Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO), which closed the Shoreham nuclear power plant, has already had its impact on the economy of our area. That ultra-generous agreement, labeled as a "Sweetheart Deal" in Wall Street circles when it was introduced, has already driven LILCO rates to the highest in the nation. The coziness that produced that agreement now appears to be coming back for a second bite at the ratepayers' finances.

Shortly after the Shoreham deal was announced came the news that the New York Power Authority (NYPA) would build three generating facilities at LILCO's request. One of those facilities is coming closer to reality. That is the Holtsville generating plant which is being pushed at an accelerated pace. We say and mean "pushed" because the wisdom of going ahead with that plan at this time should be seriously questioned. Here's why:

The future of the Shoreham plant is still in question. Following decommissioning (the removal of the radioactive contamination at that site), it will either be converted to a natural gas-burning facility or demolished. The studies of the financial feasibility of converting to natural gas are not yet complete. The Long Island Power Authority (LIPA), which controls the future of the facility, recently received three bid proposals currently being studied for the possible conversion project.

Although the full financial details of those proposals are still sketchy, covered by confidentiality restrictions, this much is known:

Three consortiums of private developers produced the bids for conversion projects ranging from 238 to 467 megawatts. One proposal would produce electricity at an estimated cost of 4.5 cents per kilowatt hour, and would save about three million barrels of imported oil annually. Another would produce energy at 5.62 cents per kilowatt hour.

The Holtsville proposal, meanwhile, estimated to cost \$150 million, is expected to produce electricity at 7.7 cents per kilowatt hour. According to a spokesman for NYPA, the Holtsville facility is being built because LILCO has determined it needs the additional capacity.

With current electric rates—which are slated to go up each year for a total of 10 years under Cuomo's Shoreham deal—bankrupting the area and driving businesses out, why is Holtsville being pushed when the energy it produces will cost more? Why was the DEIS (draft environmental impact statement) for the Holtsville plant not the subject of a public hearing. Why was the only notification of its completion the subject of a legal notice in *Newsday* and a mid-Suffolk weekly? Why was a copy of the DEIS placed in the Middle Country Library, without public notice, when the proposed facility is located in the Sachem School District.

Area civic leaders who learned of the

completion of the DEIS have expressed outrage that they have not had an opportunity to comment on the document. Worse yet, one leader was told by a DEC official in Albany that the permit for the construction of the plant is expected to be approved in the very near future. Without public comment. What's the rush here? Are we going down that Shoreham road again?

If Shoreham taught us anything, it is that we should question the hasty actions of public officials working in concert with the utility company. The state's Public Service Commission (PSC) has for decades given a blank check to LILCO, approving construction funds for Shoreham time after time, and rate increases year after year. Now we have the state's Power Authority, and the DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation), with the governor undoubtedly involved, speeding forward with a plant that may not be in the best interest of Long Island ratepayers.

What we need is an independent study of what our immediate and future energy needs will be. We need to know the answers about the cost of the Shoreham conversion. What parts of the Shoreham facility can be used if that natural gas conversion is accomplished. How much will the real cost of Holtsville be, including the cost of additional transmission lines that will be required. If a 437-megawatt plant can be realized with a Shoreham conversion, is Holtsville really needed? Would the \$150 million for that plant be better used to offset the cost of a Shoreham conversion? What will be the total cost of the construction of three additional generating plants on Long Island, and the cumulative impact on future energy costs? Are they really needed? What are the current projections for our future energy needs? Who prepared them? LILCO? Didn't we have enough faulty projections that never materialized during the Shoreham fiasco? Is there an energy master plan to provide the most economical energy costs for an area already clobbered by the actions of the past?

The head of the state's Consumer Protection Board, Richard Kessel, has been an ardent foe of LILCO rate increases for decades. He has been strangely silent on this issue. If he is truly the spokesperson for the consumer, he should be fighting to make sure we are not rushed into another bad deal. He isn't. Is it because he, as a Cuomo appointee, was the prime salesman for the Shoreham deal? Kessel is also the head of the Long Island Power Authority, another appointment by Cuomo. LIPA was devised to be an active voice in Long Island's future energy needs. But under Kessel, LIPA's voice has been muted. And, LILCO ratepayers bear the brunt of that silence.

If you are tired of paying the highest electric rates in the nation, you must be heard. You must contact Kessel (212-417-4482) and the governor (Albany office: 518-474-8390) and demand that they put the brakes on the Holtsville plant until all the answers are in. Demand that the DEIS be put before the public for scrutiny and comment before any permit is issued.

Governor Mario Cuomo must call a halt to the rush to start construction at Holtsville until it is clearly known what is in the best interest of the ratepayers. He must be more concerned about ratepayers' need than utility greed.

And why not?

## Politics in the Bar

The Suffolk County Bar Association's judicial rating system has been the target of strong criticism many times in recent years. Any credence of value or integrity left in that procedure has been destroyed by the actions of the association in their ratings of judicial candidates this year.

The association's screening committee, made up of 12 attorneys, which interviews judicial candidates, rates the candidates on qualifications which are measured on the basis of integrity, temperament, judicial scholarship, reputation, and other qualities. The candidate is then rated "qualified" or "unqualified" by that group of lawyers.

The judicial races took a new turn this year when the political leaders of both the county's Democratic and Republican parties agreed to cross-endorse. The major thrust of this move, political insiders note, was the strong desire by the GOP to diminish the Democratic stronghold on the administration of the Town of Babylon.

Babylon Supervisor Arthur Pitts has easily won re-election to his seat, and appears to have a headlock on the job. Bumping him up to a judgeship would ease that problem for the Republicans, and give them a level playing field in an effort to win back political control of the town. Thus, Pitts was given cross-endorsement for a county court seat.

Pitts, when he first went before the bar association's screening committee, was given an "unqualified" rating. He appealed, and with the help of a couple of Supreme Court judges who vouched for his qualifications, the unqualified rating was overturned and he suddenly became "qualified."

The cross-endorsement angered three sitting district judges, Joseph Klein, Louis Ohlig and Rockwell Colaneri, who launched a primary challenge against the political handpicked choices. Retaliation came in the form of a challenge to the trio's primary petitions, and they were rejected at the Board of Elections. The judges went to court, however, and won. They are currently back on the ballot.

But the story does not end there. After the judges won the fight of the pri-

mary petitions, the Suffolk County Bar Association released an "unqualified" rating for Ohlig. According to Ohlig, he appeared before the review committee in 1982 and 1988 and was found qualified for the county court both times, and in 1990 was found qualified for a state Supreme Court seat. He asks, quite understandably, why he was found qualified three times, only to be declared unqualified now.

The bar association cites an "inordinate amount of complaints filed against him," and a lack of "legal scholarship" dealing with the number of legal opinions he has written during his years on the bench. Ohlig rebuts these findings. Will he be entitled to an appeal, as was Pitts? Will it be held in the open, not behind closed doors, so all the facts come out, about all the candidates?

As noted, this is not the first controversy over bar association ratings. There was an incident of a campaign manager and associates of one judicial hopeful sitting on the screening committee rating other judicial candidates. The three were recused when a protest was lodged. But when that created a lack of a proper majority, they wound up on the com-

mittee again and voted. Not surprisingly, their man got the highest rating. That created a storm of protest, and ultimately a change in the rating system, eliminating "highly qualified," limiting ratings to "qualified" or "unqualified." But with this year's events, even these ratings must be called into question.

The selection of judges should not be part of a political grand scheme to eliminate a tough political foe. Cross-endorsements should not be the result of a back room deal to gain political advantage. Was there political pressure to have the "unqualified" rating of Pitts reversed? Do any of the lawyers who sit on the screening committee harbor judicial ambitions? Would they enhance their future ambitions by standing firm on the decision which most certainly angered the political leaders who engineered the cross-endorsement for Pitts?

Are we dealing with politics? Of course we are. And, that is wrong. We must select the best possible judges based on their merits. Politics must be removed from the process. Based on this year's rating controversy, removing the bar association might well be the first step.

And why not?

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# The gun debate should end

We recently received a letter from Jim Brady's wife asking for our support for the passage of the Brady Bill.

Jim Brady was President Ronald Reagan's press secretary who was wounded during an attempted assassination of the President by a deranged person.

This historical incident led to the submission of the Brady Bill which, for the first time, would impose federal rules and regulations on citizens' rights to acquire firearms. The supporters of this measure claim that society has been civilized to a point where there is no

need for citizens to bear arms, it is too easy for the average citizen to obtain firearms. This right and privilege should only be granted to the armed forces and organized police organizations.

Supporters want a complete ban on all guns and ammunition. Currently, each state sets its own rules and regulations. There are no federal lists of arms, individual owners or transactions. New York empowers localities to issue permits. Upstanding citizens are discouraged from owning firearms. In the five western towns of Suffolk, where the permits are issued at the pleasure of the Suffolk County police commissioner, it

takes from nine months to a year to obtain a permit. The permits are limited and the rules restrictive. In the five East End towns, which are under the jurisdiction of Sheriff Patrick Mahoney, more common sense prevails and the process is expedited.

New York City is governed by the Sullivan Law. It is considered the most restrictive in the United States. Yet, New York City is considered the gun capital of the east. If you want a gun and you have the price, you can buy anything from a Saturday night special to an automatic, assault weapon on almost any street corner, no questions

asked. Law breakers do not pay attention to the laws.

The abuse is too widespread for the penalty to fit the crime. Drive-by shootings by gangs are a regular occurrence. Cold-blooded executions and murders are counted by the hour, not by the week or the month. A citizen, however, who might have a business to protect, a family that may have been threatened while living in a bad neighborhood, cannot legally get a gun. The system stops them. When in need, they are forced to buy protection illegally.

We were all sickened by the Los Angeles (LA) riots, the looting in the wake of Hurricane Andrew. To even the most liberal of us, it was plain to see only those citizens who had the ability to protect themselves and their property stood a chance. Police in both situations were immobilized both by people and nature.

We struggle, we fiercely fight for our families and for the creation and the accumulation of our possessions. The testimony of the LA riots and the looting in Miami tell us that if we do not protect ourselves, no one will be there to do it for us.

The second article to the Amendment to the Constitution states, "(Right of people to bear arms not to be infringed.) A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." Our forefathers in their wisdom saw the day then, and into the eve of the 22nd century when men would have to have the right to use whatever means they had available to protect themselves against others that did not believe in the law, and who had the means to take the life and the possessions of those who had them.

There will be Brady instances again. The knee jerk reaction will be to establish new laws to take away the rights of the people. But in doing so, will we not just transfer the rights to those who do not believe in society or civilization?

And why not?

# Irresponsible journalism

John McNamara last week pleaded guilty to racketeering as described under the RICO law. McNamara was a highly successful automotive dealer, real estate investor and developer. He also was the owner for several years of the Record Newspapers.

McNamara was accused of defrauding General Motors of hundreds of millions of dollars. With McNamara's guilty plea, probably no one should come to his defense. We do not defend him in what he pleaded guilty to, but we do defend him against all the other scurrilous charges that were leveled against him, not during his arrest, not in the bill of particulars of his indictment, nor even at his day in court where he pleaded guilty. We defend him against the numerous charges that were brought against him by the media and most prominently, Newsday.

We were sickened by the behavior of this journal. Protocol and ethics in journalism do not permit the media to pronounce someone guilty before they have been found so by a court. Day after day we read that McNamara was guilty of stealing, not alleged or indicted for, but guilty of. There were numerous other allegations that were made, based on rumor and heresay. Written to make a point, written to create an impression, rather than written with truth and fairness in mind.

McNamara, in his confession, has agreed to cooperate with the federal government. He alleges corruption within Brookhaven Town. He did not reveal the names of the participants in court or the details of the involvement. The Justice Department, the FBI, the IRS and the Frauds Bureau of the Post Office all have ongoing investigations into these allegations.

Newsday, in a colorful, front page took these innuendos, these allegations and without naming names but naming titles and almost every branch of government in Brookhaven Town, has convicted everybody of corruption with one broad brush. If everyone is guilty, let them hang. If there is one person, many or the majority, who are free of taint, who have spent their lives protecting their reputations, why should they be crucified with the same nameless hammer?

To us, this is totally unjustified, irresponsible journalism. The truth will come out in time. Those that may be guilty will be given a fair trial, where, under our system of justice, they are innocent until proven guilty.

As editor and publisher, I believe just about the lowest person on my totem pole is a governmental official who has sworn to uphold the constitution

and then cheats and steals in violation of not only moral, ethical, and civil, but constitutional rules as well. These elected officials should be treated far more harshly than normal citizens because of the weight of their pledge.

Those that are not involved, those who have entered public service for the good of their communities and with a desire to serve, should not have to face the humiliation and the eyes of their families, their children, their friends, neighbors and associates because a newspaper recklessly has tarnished all their reputations for sensationalism.

A subscription to Newsday may be worth \$5,000 to its corporate owners in Los Angeles, but what is the reputation of an individual worth here on Long Island who forever more may be considered guilty by association because Newsday said so.

McNamara has pleaded guilty. He should pay the fullest penalty for his crimes. If his allegations are true, those he corrupted or was corrupted by should pay even more harshly.

Let the facts reveal themselves. Stop trying to sell newspapers with headlines at the cost of the reputations of good citizens of Suffolk County.

And why not?

# What are they hiding from the public?

At the first hint of scandal in a published report just before elections last year, the newly-elected Supervisor John LaMura and the town board engaged former Supreme Court Justice Pierre Lunberg, now a Riverhead attorney, to review the ethics of the officials within Brookhaven Town.

Approximately four weeks ago, Lunberg delivered his report to the town board. For a time it sat unopened because town board members were in their summer season, or on vacation. Now it turns out, the report has been labeled "confidential" and is not slated, at this time, for release for public scrutiny. Brookhaven Town citizens who paid for this report and whose government it is about, should be demanding to know why it is being kept under wraps.

What are the contents? What does it say? Who does it name, if anybody, and

what allegations of wrongdoing may be indicated? Failure of this report to be released gives legitimacy to a whole host of questions that have floated around Brookhaven Town for several years.

Let's just review a few of these situations that might be the subject of an ethics scrutiny, and could even be contained in the report. LaMura's father-in-law is Tom Nepell. Nepell owns a major insurance agency within the town. Nepell has been continually awarded the vast majority of the town's insurance without bid. Does the report examine the ethics of this? Does the report suggest that there might be something unethical about granting your father-in-law several million dollars worth of business without going through the normal bid process?

Does the report touch on the fact that former Supervisor Henrietta Ac-

campora and the current supervisor, John LaMura, purchased homes from an individual who owned both the development where their homes were located, and is the landlord of the leased town hall complex? Is there anything unethical about this? Was it just a coincidence?

Does the report touch on the ethics of the involvement of John McNamara with individuals in the town? Was there anything unethical about former Councilman Don Zimmer resigning as councilman and immediately going to work for John McNamara?

Does the report look into the allegations that certain law firms seem to have more expertise, or more influence, with the zoning and planning boards when they are requesting variances and changes?

There are a whole host of other alle-

gations that have persistently dogged the Brookhaven government. To clarify and to possibly put to rest these allegations, the town invested the taxpayers' money. The report is finished, the ink is over 30 days dry, yet, the report is still embargoed. Why?

The report, if released, might exonerate everybody. Then again, it might not. It might well be that Newsday's published report was exaggerated. They have been before. There might have been conflicts of interest, or just appearance of conflicts, or maybe no substance to any of the claims.

What does LaMura and his supporters in town government who are enforcing this embargo have to hide? Release the report. Don't just talk about open and honest government, do it! They have the authority to do so. Let the report's contents stand on its merit. End the suspicion once and for all.

And why not?

# 'A' for effort, but 'F' for results

County Executive Bob Gaffney had scribbled on his copy of the proposed Suffolk County budget for 1993 the phrase, "ugly but honest." That's a true statement. The budget calls for a 25 percent increase in real estate taxes on the East End, and an 18 percent hike on the West End, for an average county-wide tax hike in the county portion of our real estate taxes of a little over 19 percent.

Gaffney and his staff appear to have done a thorough job in trying to reduce the tax impact, but, unfortunately, this was not enough. The sins of the past, one-shots, rollovers and deliberate shortfalls, have all come due. The year 1993 is when Paul must pay back Peter.

The budget contains numerous instances of consolidation, elimination of vacant positions and the termination of 55 positions, most of which are administrative posts that Gaffney categorizes as patronage plums.

Gaffney claims that they have cut back the spending under their control from \$71.3 million to \$50.7 million for a reduction of \$20.6 million. This was counteracted by an increase in the mandated expenditures ordered by the federal and state governments that will increase from \$84.7 million to \$147.2 million, for a total of \$62.5 million that must be raised through increased taxes or offset by additional cuts in discretion-

ary spending. Thus, even with the reduction of \$20.6 million, an additional \$41.8 million must be raised through increased taxes or offset by additional cuts in discretionary spending.

This is the budget the county executive has prepared for the operation of Suffolk County in 1993. The people that are going to be asked to fund it are the residents. The very same residents who have lost their jobs, have had a cutback in hours, an elimination of profits, and who are barely hanging on by their thumbnails. While we acknowledge that Gaffney and his staff have worked very hard to produce a sensible budget, where does he and the county government propose that residents find the

money to fund these kinds of increases of the county portion of their real estate taxes?

In normal economic times, the work force of Suffolk County might rationally respond, "I'll work some overtime" or "I'll get a second job" or "My spouse will go from part-time to full-time." They might even say, "I'll give up the vacation" or "cut back on the food budget." Don't people in government realize that over the last three years most of these avenues have been exhausted by most of the residents? Almost everyone is frustrated and have no idea where to turn.

Gaffney's approach to the budget is honest. We do not believe it's a fudged budget that relies upon false assumptions. For this he should get an "A" for effort. But, Gaffney also should be given an "F" for not having cut Suffolk's cost of government back during the past year. While he made an effort, it was too little and too late.

Gaffney has no choice but to dismantle more of Suffolk's government through his budget proposals. We cannot afford the government we have grown. Although Suffolk's government employees, on a per capita basis, are fewer than our counterparts throughout the nation, but these employees are paid far more than their numerous counterparts.

The temptation of the Suffolk County Legislature will be to emotionally condemn Gaffney's budget. There will be a howl of protest about the projected tax increase. If the legislators follow past practices, after the uproar they will go back into their dark corners and hatch up plots to add their favorite programs back into the budget instead of doing what is responsible, which is to pare Gaffney's budget down more to mitigate against a tax increase.

During the next two months, residents and taxpayers should pack the house at the county legislature meetings, demand cutbacks, not increases. In addition, residents should speak personally to their county legislators, even if it requires going to their homes if they are not available at their offices.

Put the pressure on them, keep it on them. Shout out in unity--reductions, not increases. This is our county and we cannot afford any additional tax increases.

And why not?

## The Suffolk County Reds

A new minor league ball club has been proposed for Suffolk County. We think it should be called the "Suffolk Reds" to reflect the red ink this county is drowning in, and the red ink that will be created if the county goes into the unwise choice of building this ball club a new ballpark.

Operating with a Certificate of Necessity from the county executive's office, a proposal was to have been voted on, if it wasn't tabled, on Tuesday, to spend over a half-million dollars to do an engineering study and develop plans for a Suffolk County owned and financed ballpark.

The park is estimated to cost \$7.5 million to build. It would be located in Brentwood, off Wicks Road. The park would be leased to a promoter for an unspecified sum. Before the county legislature voted on this measure, they should have answered some very basic questions.

If this is such a good economic idea, why aren't private investors lining up to profit from this endeavor? Has Nassau County profited from owning the Nassau Coliseum?

Is the establishment of an outdoor baseball stadium an absolute necessity and a top priority during these times of fiscal instability?

If Suffolk County is to invest in this facility, what are the direct profits it can expect to receive for this investment? Are the profits relative to the risk that may be involved? Can the private sector be induced to invest in this facility if the county leased the land and provided IDA (Industrial Development Agency) financing for the construction?

Will there be an ironclad contract with the promoter that will require him to make annual payments to cover the cost of the bonding? Will the franchise holder be required to sign a contract guaranteeing the team will stay in the stadium for as long as the outstanding indebtedness exists?

Is there a cost overrun cap built into the project that will require the contractor or contractors to complete the project on time, within budget or pay penalties? Are there guarantees that the cost, as now estimated, are accurate? Will there be any guarantee that the construction contracts or the operating contracts for the stadium will exclusively go to Suffolk or Long Island firms?

For the investment the county is making in the stadium, will they receive an equity position in the franchise of the team?

What was the rush to vote on this contract yesterday? Wouldn't it have been more prudent to allow for a full open hearing and airing of this proposal so that a sense of the residents could be felt? Are you satisfied that all of your questions have been answered by the two reports that have been done? We've read them, we're not!

What guarantees are in place that the owner of the team will not simply up and leave, as he is doing to Albany, if the financial returns do not meet his expectations? After all, if we build a stadium with taxpayers' dollars, with no investment on his part, what is to stop him from packing his bags and leaving?

Did anyone do their homework, go up to Albany and talk to officials and businesses up there to see how much of an economic impact this team had on that area? Did they draw the spectators? What was the attendance per game? How much of an economic impact did this venture have on hotels, restaurants, and other businesses in the area? Did we bother to base our decision on actual facts, or rely on projections, estimates, and dreams?

Last, if not foremost, how could our legislators, in good conscience, vote to prudently invest Suffolk County resi-

dents' funds in this endeavor? Is it financially responsible or will we start down the path to another Cohalan court complex or Southwest Sewer District?

When we first got wind of this scheme, we immediately sent all 18 legislators and our county executive a letter containing these questions. We hoped to encourage them to think before they acted.

The only way we can see the county going into this deal would be if they had an ironclad guarantee that the promoter would guarantee direct revenue coming into the county through leases and guaranteed shares of the gross that would amount to a minimum of \$2.5 million per year. This would bring us about even after 10 years including the capital repayment, interest and payments in lieu of real estate taxes.

We doubt there are many entrepreneurs who would see the feasibility of a minor league baseball team generating this type of revenue to make it worth the risk.

We would love to see a baseball, football or hockey team based in Suffolk County. If private enterprise would like to venture the capital and reap the rewards, we will give them our full support. Considering the financial condition of the county and its residents, a baseball stadium for a promoter is not at the top of our list.

What's your opinion? Let's hear it! And why not?

## Your vote does count

We can thoroughly understand the frustration of voters who say, "My vote does not count, why should I bother?" These people now make up almost 40 percent of the potential electorate. On Election Day they cannot vote because they are not registered.

There is still time for you to register. You can register on Tuesday, October 6, and Saturday, October 10, at various locations throughout the county. Registration forms are available at the Board of Elections in Yaphank, at all post offices, town halls, libraries, and village halls. All mail-in registrations must be post-marked no later than October 9. You can also go to the Board of Elections in Yaphank and register in person, by October 9. Once registered you are eligible to vote in any election during the next

four years or forever more as long as you do not change your address.

During the Democratic primary, we saw the value of each and every vote. A few thousand votes more would have changed the outcome of the U.S. Senate primary contest, in which over a million people did vote.

If you are fed up and disgusted with your government and with the taxes you pay, you can vote to change the system by going into the polling booth and voting out the incompetents who have given you this current government.

If the 40 percent of the people who are not registered to vote register and vote to throw out the incumbents, every incumbent would lose and we would have brand new governments in Washington and Albany.

If you had considered registering to vote for Perot, and are now disheartened because he is not running, we encourage you to register to vote. If there is no one in office you would like to see stay there, vote for his opponent, but for God's sake, exercise your franchise and take back your government.

During the last gubernatorial election, almost half the electorate were not registered to vote. Of those who were registered half chose not to vote. The end result was that Governor Mario Cuomo was re-elected as the governor of New York State by less than 13 percent of the the state's electorate. Look at what our apathy cost us.

Don't complain about what government is doing to you unless you are part of creating government.

And why not?

# Government: It's broke and broken

Both our federal and state governments are broke and broken. We see little hope on the horizon for change. The same old people who have caused the problems will be returned to office. The incumbents have such an enormous edge that challengers rarely are successful in their bid to overthrow them.

There is only one answer that can give hope, term limitations. Yet, this one glimmer of hope is but a distant flicker as the incumbents are the only ones who can make the change, and they are not about to do it.

As incumbents gain seniority, the

quality of the challenger goes down. Some races become non-races. The challengers do not have the knowledge, the identification, or the money to even put up loyal opposition. The incumbents go back into office and continue to operate government as it has been.

In congress we have seen what this has led to, corruption and outright total abuse of the office. In the state government, the same charges can be leveled, but more importantly, our elected senators and assemblymen turn over their responsibility of office to the leaders of their party. Because of this, three men

have sole control over the state government, the senate majority leader, the assembly majority leader and the governor. It has become so pervasive that members of both the minority and majority parties are not even asked their opinions on budgets and laws. Members end up not even voting on some bills. The leaders simply throw a switch and all members of that party are counted as having cast a vote. These leaders stay in power until they either die, quit or are indicted. When this happens, they are replaced by equally powerful men.

Our legislature was once considered

a place of service. Honorable men and women would take a few years out of their life, devote it to public service, give it their best and get out after four to six years. These citizen legislators have been replaced by career politicians. The main thrust of their efforts is to get re-elected. Their main responsibility is to make the best living they can for themselves. They have become immune to their constituents. The incumbency allows them to be re-elected by rote, rather than by reason.

Term limitations would bring back citizen legislators. If after two or three terms legislators were not allowed to run for re-election, voters would be given the opportunity of choosing between two new faces. Better qualified candidates would emerge. There would not only be an equal opportunity to win office, but these new faces would be more responsive to the voters. They would bring fresh ideas and the ability to crack the all-powerful bureaucratic system in the legislature. Leaders would be changed regularly. Unbridled power could not be accumulated.

Seasoned politicians oppose term limitations. They will tell you that the bureaucrats, the staffers, would have control and they would be the only ones with legislative memory. That's hogwash and it ignores the fact that these same staffers they fear already control the legislature today, and the only time they are changed is when new faces come into office.

Legislators are free to choose their own staffs upon election. Many legislators would bring staffers with them, people they are comfortable with and who had been associated with them in their past endeavors. Sure, the routine staff will still be there, the clerks, the secretaries and the other support personnel, but, are these the people that have the power and make the decisions?

Our government is broke, the taxpayers are broke. The government is paralyzed because changes do not come from the electorate. Term limitations is the only glimmer of hope we have left. You should demand that the people you vote for this November are pledged to support term limitations. If they won't, then throw them out of office.

And why not?

## Play ball!

# Deficits 12, Taxpayers 5

The Suffolk County Deficits, also known as the Suffolk County Legislature, reached out to embrace another minor league operation, The Albany-Colonie Yankees, and voted to spend \$500,000 of taxpayers' dollars to conduct a planning study for the construction of a \$7.5 million stadium, also at taxpayers' expense. That decision came during an extra-innings legislative game which lasted until the wee hours of the morning.

The Deficits' lineup during that game was limited to 12 of the 18 players on the roster. Five roster members refused to play, voting against the expenditure of taxpayers' dollars at a time when they face an average increase in the county taxes of 20 percent, in some cases much more. One member of the roster straddled the left field fence. He abstained.

The Deficits manager, Donald Blydenburgh, he's also presiding officer of the group, was among the five that refused to play. There are rumors afoot that he may be fired by General Manager Bob Gaffney because he has not played very good ball in recent times. He had to be dragged into a recent game which raised the sales tax, and has been accused of late of making some very bad trades, releasing committee chairman and replacing them with players of dubious value.

The Deficits were cheered on by an unusually large crowd on hand for the game which remained scoreless until the final inning, which took place at about 3:30 a.m., when the final pitch was made and the winning votes came in. The final score was Deficits, 12; Taxpayers, 5.

The end came after the Deficits were refreshed with a hot dog and soda, an offering undoubtedly designed to keep the ball game atmosphere alive for the late inning rally.

A key source of motivation for the Deficits was the rallying cries of the crowd on hand for the game. They were there for a reason. They wanted a new stadium. Not for the luxury or comfort of a new facility. But, rather, for the jobs. Legislators were also impressed by the number of calls they got in district offices favoring the proposal. Of course these calls could have come from the same 20 fans calling each legislator. Such are the ways of lobbying efforts launched by unions who want nothing more than jobs, and team owners with their own special axes to grind. One legislator expressed "surprise" about the number of calls received, and the fact

that "only one was opposed, the rest were all in favor."

A poll of 300 county residents conducted September 15 as a community service by Mktg. Inc., produced different results. To the question, "I support the construction of a new sports stadium in western Suffolk County," the results were: completely agree, 43.9 percent; somewhat agree, 19.7 percent, for a combined total of 63.6 percent; completely disagree, 21.6 percent; somewhat disagree, 6.8 percent, for a combined total of 28.4 percent. Another 8.1 percent had no position, didn't know or refused to answer.

But then, to the statement, "Suffolk County needs a minor league baseball team, and county government should spend \$500,000 on plans for a \$7.5 million ballpark," the results were somewhat different: completely agree, 19 percent; somewhat agree, 21.6 percent, for a combined total of 40.6 percent; completely disagree, 38.7 percent; somewhat disagree, 13.5 percent, a combined total of 52.2 percent.

When the cost was put on the taxpayer, 13 percent had a different view. This polling took place before Gaffney announced his average county tax increase of 20 percent, higher in some areas. The results today would be, we'd venture to guess, very different.

Back to the ball game: heavy hitters in the Deficits attack for the Albany-

Colonie Yankees were Rick Lazio, Tom Finlay, and Steve Levy. They scored more runs for the proposal than all others, and Lazio and Levy were credited with providing the most power in negotiations to make the deal easier to swallow.

The lure for the Albany-Colonie Yankees, which have also operated at a deficit in recent years and, some suggest, should be renamed the Suffolk County Reds, was the promise of millions in economic growth, seasonal jobs, and, of course, those construction jobs. The promises of economic impact are based on reports and projections which have come under serious questioning as to reality. Preliminary checks into the economic windfall experienced in the Albany-Colonie area, not by the legislators, but by others, have not yet turned up any enthusiastic responses concerning economic value reaped by the presence of the team.

It is doubtful that the recent 12-to-five win by the Deficits will help elevate them in the standings. In fact, with the dismal record the Deficits have achieved, with two sales tax hikes, deficit bonding without spending cuts, and now a major tax rate increase, with the possibility of a deficit still looming, the granting of free agent status to many on the Deficits roster would be a much safer bet.

And why not?

# New York State's sick sales tax

Would you believe that New York State imposes an 11 percent sales tax on medical payments? We first got wind of this scheme last spring. It was so preposterous that, as cynical as we can be, we didn't believe that Albany would attempt to impose such an onerous tax.

During our interviews with state legislators, however, we have come to realize not only was this tax suggested, it has been imposed and starting in November, when insurance companies make payments to hospitals, 11 percent of the payment will be in the form of a sales tax that will go into the general fund of the state.

The way this scheme works is the insurance company is billed at 100 per-

cent of the charge. A surcharge of 13 percent is placed on top of this. The funds raised from this fee go back to the "Blues" who have the obligation and responsibility of insuring everyone, whether they are sick or well. This is hard to swallow, but there is some fairness and logic to it. On top of this, the governor and the legislature will be imposing an additional 11 percent surcharge, which could also be described as a "sales tax." This money will go into the general fund to pay for the cost of government.

What kind of society are we living in that taxes people for being sick? What kind of people will gouge you when you are down? Is there any difference be-

tween these hoodlums and the looters who robbed people after Hurricane Andrew in Florida?

The affect of these two measures will add over 24 percent to the cost of our medical policies in the future. Health care is out of reach for many people today. Taxing health care for general government purposes will put it even further out of reach. More people will be forced to gamble on not having health insurance.

As we said when we first heard of this proposal, on its face it appeared to be so ludicrous that we didn't think it would ever get past the talking stage. Yet, here it is law in liberal New York. Shame!

And why not?