

WILLMOTTS & WHY NOTS

DAVID J. WILLMOTT SR., EDITOR

You and Y2K

in the
magazine

For the past two years, Suffolk Life Newspapers has been exploring the potential for problems with the Y2K bug. We have been reviewing all of Suffolk Life's computer systems and the other mechanical pieces of equipment that may be dependent upon or interfaced to a computer. Every time a problem is found it must be fixed.

When creating computer formats, industry programmers did not consider the fact that the 20th century would come to an end. To save computer memory, decisions were made to leave off the first two digits of the year. The industry never considered the ramifications of that decision for their products, once the year 2000 came. As a result, computer chips were designed to fail, and this has the potential of raising havoc after midnight on December 31, 1999.

The pitfalls of Y2K have been known for several years. It was common belief that if you bought a piece of equipment after 1995 it was Y2K compliant. But we recently learned that even equipment within the last year or two is not necessarily compliant. The manufacturer may have used components that predated the 1995 cutoff. Other manufacturers may have sold parts they may have claimed were compliant but were not.

A few weeks ago, we started looking around our own home and were amazed at the amount of things we take for granted that have digital date readouts. In the kitchen alone we found the following items: oven, microwave, stove, and tide clock. If it has a microprocessor (clock or digital readout), it is subject to failure. Our thermostats, the televisions, and VCRs may also be affected.

In Washington, D.C., Congress has been debating who is responsible for these potential failures. Manufacturers are lobbying to be held blameless. Trial lawyers see this as the windfall of the century due to the possibility of class action and personal law suits, and are drooling at the potential of a waterfall of cash. Most trial lawyers work on a percentage, usually one-third, and are envisioning every jury having a juror whose microwave or digital alarm clock failed.

Congress is looking for a middle ground. It is so obvious, it is staring our federal representatives right in the face. When individuals or businesses invest in a piece of equipment, it has a normal, predetermined life expectancy. If Y2K causes equipment to falter and be

rendered useless before its normal, expected life-span, does the manufacturer have a responsibility? We believe they do.

Manufacturers generally warrantee a piece of equipment for a very limited period of time, but the consumer expects to obtain benefit from that equipment for many years beyond the warrantee. The consumer expects to pay for labor and parts after that limited warrantee period because of wear and tear, but by giving the equipment good maintenance, they usually can get years of additional life out of it. The Y2K situation is no different.

Any law Congress crafts should reflect the liability for a useful life of the product after

the warrantee has expired. The manufacturer should have a legal obligation to offer consumers a replacement, minus the value of the useful life of the equipment.

In the meantime, we recommend that if you have not already addressed the Y2K problem in your home or business that you do not put it off any longer. Take an electronic inventory, write down the serial number and the model number of the equipment and of course, the manufacturer. Try to determine the approximate date you purchased these items. Write to the manufactures and ask if the item is Y2K compliant: if it is not, ask for the manufacturer's solution to the problem.

We must not let this wait until the last minute. You will be affected by Y2K. We must take the matter into our own hands now. And why not?

Playing Politics

Suffolk residents will not completely benefit from this year's back-to-school tax-free week in September thanks to two county officials who decided to play politics instead of helping the public.

County Executive Robert Gaffney and Legislative Presiding Officer Stephen Hackling are claiming they simply forgot to let the legislature know it had to approve legislation to allow the public to benefit from the tax-free back-to-school sales that historically take place during Labor Day week.

Every year the state has been approving a measure that suspends its 4% sales tax imposed on all clothing and footwear under a \$110 value.

Several years ago, Suffolk County and Nassau County began doing the same thing. This year Nassau is not participating because it is in a fiscal crisis. Suffolk County will not be suspending its 4.25% sales tax, however, because of political gamesmanship.

Of course, both Gaffney and Hackling are denying they purposely withheld the

information from the legislature.

They seem to have convinced themselves that they are justified in not supporting the sales tax suspension this month because Suffolk County cannot afford to lose the estimated \$2.4 million in sales tax revenues, especially since the county will be eliminating its 4.25% sales tax next March.

The state was expected to end its sales tax permanently at the end of the year also, but reneged on the proposal because the state legislators were afraid they would not have enough money to fund the state budget. So obviously we cannot depend on what may or may not happen in the future.

Suffolk residents deserve a tax break this month regardless of whatever else the county is planning.

Gaffney and Hackling were playing politics and every resident in Suffolk should tack their purchase receipts to their refrigerators so that in the November election they will remember who was looking out for their interest and who was not.

And why not?

Isn't Anybody Aware?

With all the infighting over the Shoreham certiorari judgment, doesn't anybody realize Suffolk County residents have been paying for this debt since LIPA took over LILCO?

When LIPA refunded Nassau County more than twice as much as it refunded Suffolk County ratepayers, we made a \$148 million down payment on the Shoreham debt.

Since then, when our electric bills come every two months, Suffolk's rate has been 2% higher than Nassau's. Because of this bifurcation difference, Suffolk residents paid another \$40 million toward the Shoreham debt in 1998; and, in 1999, we have paid an

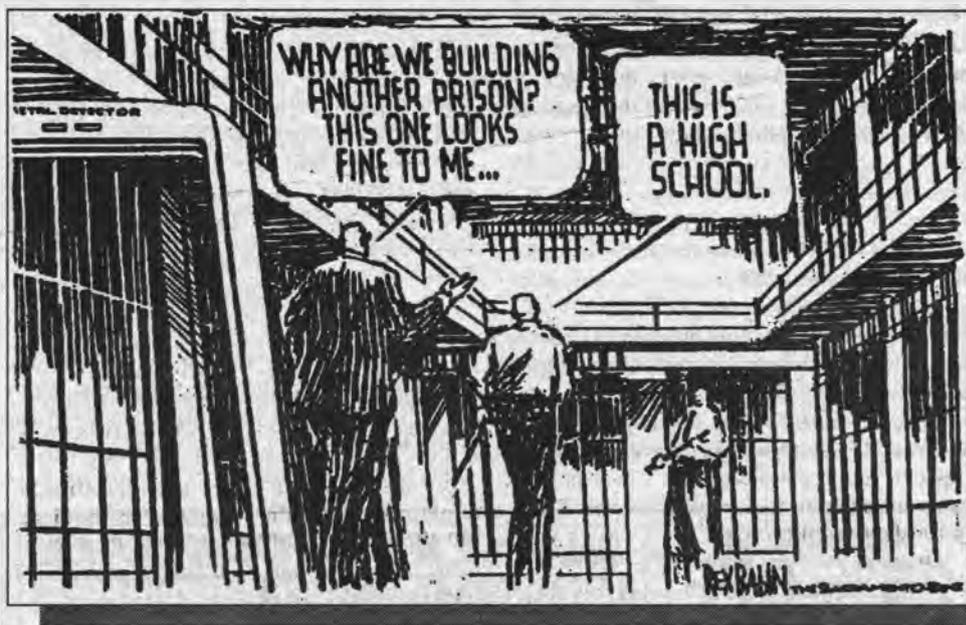
estimated \$28 million more on this debt.

The combined payment from the rebate deposit and the bifurcation difference totals \$216 million which has already been paid toward the Shoreham a certiorari judgment in just two years.

Yet, a daily newspaper recently editorialized that Suffolk should stop fighting the judgment and start paying it. Somebody should wake up the boys and girls in Melville. We have been paying this debt right along.

If Suffolk County wins its lawsuit against LIPA, we will be entitled to a substantial refund.

And why not?



Nature's Way

There have been numerous stories in the mainstream press and on television touting alternative medicines. To the medical establishment's chagrin, the media has awakened to the alternatives to established medicines.

The populace awoke first and has been using vitamins and herbal therapies to treat what ails it. We have seen first hand how effective alternative medicines can be. Several years ago, an acquaintance of ours was diagnosed with bone cancer. She was told she had three weeks to live. She had been treated with both radiation and chemotherapy and her doctors had given up hope and sent her home to die.

A neighbor told her about shark cartilage therapy. He had successfully used it for arthritis. In desperation, she tried it. Her three weeks of life turned into three months. When she visited the doctor and he took a CAT scan, her tumors had shrunk by 50%. At six months, an MRI revealed the tumors had disappeared. A cureall? Not necessarily, but it is a possible cure for some.

The person who developed this therapy is Dr. William Lane, who wrote the book entitled, "Sharks Don't Get Cancer." The foreword was written by Jonas Salk's wife. Salk perfected the polio vaccine, and had

been ridiculed before he was able to bring it to the market. Millions of lives were needlessly wasted because the medical establishment had put up roadblocks. Polio was big business. Mrs. Salk suggested Lane has been similarly stymied.

Recently, the FDA announced it will begin investigating and possibly doing clinical trials on Lane's theories.

Ironically, we had a dog who was diagnosed with bone cancer. We were told she had a very short period of time to live. We decided to try shark cartilage therapy. We contacted Dr. Jay Wen, who practices not only traditional veterinarian medicine but also alternative medicine. He prescribed the proper dosage of shark cartilage and other herbs. The dog showed a remarkable recovery. The tumor stopped growing, but, unfortunately, she succumbed to another ailment.

Invasive medical procedures and chemical therapies are often the right treatment, but they are not the only methods that can be used. In many cases, alternative medicines may cure what ails us by allowing nature to work in harmony with natural herbs. We should be cautious about what we take, but we do encourage our readers to investigate these alternative treatments.

And why not?

WILLMOTTS & WHY NOTS

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Let the Hearings Begin

The Suffolk County Legislature has unanimously passed a resolution mandating public hearings concerning LIPA. It wants answers to a number of questions pertaining to the bailout of LILCO, and to statements made by LIPA representatives prior to and after that takeover.

The legislature granted itself subpoena powers that will force reluctant witnesses to come forth and testify under oath. Once and for all, the legislature and the public will get to hear some of the details leading up to the deal, and the promises and assertions that have been made concerning the \$1.2 billion Shoreham certiorari suit.

We might even get a true account-

ing of how much the ratepayers have already paid for Shoreham, and an accounting of how much credit those ratepayers have received for that payment.

Suffolk Life had asked LIPA proponents and officials to investigate how much the ratepayers had contributed toward the construction of the plant through CWIP (construction while in progress) funds and rate assessments. We also asked what the real cost of construction was for the Shoreham nuclear power plant. Answers to these questions have

never been forthcoming. The legislature wants the answers and now has the subpoena powers to get to the bottom of this mess.

The legislature will also try to determine how much LIPA has been putting away for the repayment of the certiorari judgment. There are a number of questions that the legislature

and the public need answered. We hope the witnesses who will be called will be forthcoming and not spend ratepayers' money on lawyers to avoid telling the truth.

The public hearings will be held at 11 a.m. in the legislative chambers on Monday, September 13, in Huppauge; and on Thursday, October 7, in Riverhead.

Let the truth be told.
And why not?

State Should Reimburse County

Suffolk Sheriff Patrick Mahoney and County Executive Robert Gaffney have found one thing to agree on — the state's failure to pay its fair share to the county for maintaining prisoners who are scheduled to do state time.

The state reimburses the county \$37 per day for the county to hold inmates for the state. It costs the county \$114 per prisoner for each day they are incarcerated. As Suffolk County Sheriff, Mahoney filed a suit against the state government for at least \$12 million for the county's losses over the last 10 years.

The state is under a court order to transfer prisoners within 14 days after they have been convicted. The state is violating this court order and some

times allows the prisoners to languish for several weeks. This has contributed to the over-crowding at the county jail.

The state, which oversees the jails, has put limits on how many prisoners can be housed and can order the county to build new and more expensive jails. Obviously, the state is part of the problem and should accept its responsibility to remove the prisoners on time and to fairly compensate the county for the cost of these prisoners.

It is unfortunate that Mahoney has had to resort to a lawsuit. Common sense and good government would have prevented this inequitable but obvious problem.

And why not?

Something Is Wrong With Their Logic

New York State has the third highest automobile insurance rates in the nation. Most of us complain about it, but accept the logic that our state has a larger than normal percentage of liability cost.

Senator Charles Schumer recently issued an analysis that indicated our insurance costs may not have anything to do with the cost of the insurance companies' expenses. He pointed out that between 1993 and 1997, the number of cars stolen in New York decreased from 151,835 to 79,740 — almost a 50% reduction. Yet, the premiums went up by 10% percent for comprehensive insurance, which covers theft. Something is wrong with this logic and Schumer intends to get to the bottom of it.

Schumer went on to point out that

insurance rates overall for this period increased by 14% while automobile fatalities dropped 8.1% and personal injuries dropped 3.6%.

Those of us who live outside of the metropolitan area are totally dependent upon our cars for transportation. We have no choice but to drive and we are mandated by law to have insurance. Have the insurance companies been allowed to gouge their captive customers? What does the State Insurance Department have to say about this?

Schumer has opened the box. It would be refreshing to see our State Assembly and State Senate pay attention to the situation as it affects each of their constituents. How about calling for a legislative hearing?

And why not?



Primary Day Tuesday, September 14

Primary Day is next Tuesday, September 14.

Voters who are enrolled in a specific political party are allowed to cast their vote for the candidate to be the standard bearer of that party.

In the past, primaries were basically limited to two or three candidates who were of a particular political faith and were contending for that party's nomination.

Today, because of ruthless wheeling and dealing, we have politicians of one philosophy running in primaries of the opposition parties even though they do not share the same philosophies or beliefs of those parties. This is the result of political leaders working out cross-endorsement deals. The old "You wash my back, I will wash yours, and we both share the spoils."

The political leaders who make

these deals are counting on their loyal followers to act as a supporting voting bloc. They hope the rank and file, the average person who may have a different opinion, will not show up at the polls. With a low voter turn out, these party leaders can control the outcome.

If you are enrolled in a specific party, why not spoil the bosses' grand plan. Turn out and vote for the candidates who you feel best represent your philosophy of government. Do Democrats want Conservative candidates? Do Liberals want Republicans?

You have joined a particular party because of its philosophy. You should do everything possible not to allow it to be sold out as some cheap commodity.

And why not?

Voting On Primary Day Is Important

WILLMOTTS & WHY NOTS

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Clinton's Waco Incineration Revisited

In his first term of office, President Bill Clinton allowed more than 80 United States citizens, both adults and children, to be burned to death in Waco, Texas. These people belonged to a non-mainstream religion. They were portrayed as an evil cult, but they were still U.S. citizens whose rights should have been protected under our Constitution; yet, they were destroyed by the government.

The compound in which they were housed was under siege by the FBI. Attorney General Janet Reno, in the aftermath of the tragedy, said the buck stopped with her, that she took full responsibility. But the buck did not stop with her; it stopped with the president of the United States.

Six years have passed and it turns out the FBI lied to Reno. She claims the FBI told her its agents did not use any incendiary devices in the Waco siege, but, in fact, they had. After an investigative report brought out the truth, the FBI finally admitted the agents used these devices, but now the FBI claims the incendiary devices were only shot at a bunker several hours before the inferno broke out.

Most American citizens want to believe in their government. This is becoming harder every day. We want to believe that the government's intention is to protect us, not harm us. Many of us, particularly the mainstream media, went into denial over this incident. We blindly sided with our govern-

ment and its untrue stories.

How frightening it is to realize our government can be turned against us and we have little recourse. The Waco incineration is now going to be investigated by retired Senator John Danforth, who is known to be tough and honest, but we wonder just how far he will get.

This administration has persistently lied to the American people and made a mockery out of the truth. It has stonewalled on

important issues before, and the American public has no reason to believe this administration will do any differently even if Danforth's investigations reveal perjury and a disregard for the Constitution and the constitutional rights of U.S. citizens.

The government must not be immune to the will of the people or the law of the land. Those who are responsible for the Waco incident must be brought to justice.

And why not?

Now Is the Time for Prudence

Most towns and the county government are preparing budgets for the year 2000. We, therefore, would like our current elected officials to reflect back to the mid-eighties. We had just gone through some tough, economic times and the economy was booming. Politicians spent taxpayers' money foolishly and with vigor. There was not anything, it seemed, the government could not afford.

When the economy faltered in 1987 and 1991, our municipalities found themselves in deep, financial trouble. They had given raises that were too generous, made too many concessions in union contracts, and developed programs they could not sustain. This led to the government having to lay off workers. Needed maintenance was postponed, taxes were substantially increased, and the East End saw a 76% increase in the county portion of its real estate taxes.

Today, our economy is healthy and the temptation to spend is great, but we urge

our lawmakers to show caution and prudence. No town or county budget should exceed the rate of inflation. Some towns are enjoying an exceptional building boom, particularly from second homes, which pay substantial taxes, but do not impose a big drain on services. Taxes in these towns should come down. As the tax base is enlarged, and if government spending is controlled, taxes should be reduced.

Prudent financial managers have successfully run businesses by doing with less in the good times so they have a cushion to rely on during economic downturns. We must always remember that our economy is a pendulum and we must always be prepared for it to swing in the other direction. Your interest and involvement at this time is more important than during hard times. When the towns and county governments hold budget hearings, we encourage the residents to turn out and speak up.

And why not?

Keep on Living

Most of us do not like to plan or think about death, but it is something that should be planned for. We do not like to acknowledge the reality that someday we must all die; yet this fear of the unknown and refusal to recognize that death is inevitable is a foolish mistake.

We recently lost a close friend, Lou Grasso, who had made no such plans. His death was sudden and his wife, Suzee, was shocked. Within hours of Lou's passing, she was asked if she would consider a donation of his corneas to The Eye Bank For Sight Restoration. She consented, knowing her husband would have chosen to continue to give even in death.

The organization recently sent Suzee a letter of appreciation: "Through your generous act, two people who were among the thousands of men, women and children dependent upon The Eye Bank will within a short time, be restored to normal, active lives in their communities." The letter went on to say Lou's spirit will live on in the sight of others.

This letter touched and reminded us of the need for organ donors. Many of our

body parts can be harvested and given to other living beings who need replacements so they can continue on with their lives.

We encourage all our readers to do as we have done. Write a living will directing your next of kin to offer your body parts to others in need. When you renew your drivers license, there is a section you can check-off indicating you are a willing donor in case of a fatal accident.

The giving of yourself is a most unselfish act. Hundreds of people die every day because they cannot get a new heart, kidney, lung or other parts to replace their defective ones. Thousands of people die everyday with their organs, not realizing that in death they can save someone else's life, or at least make it more bearable.

When you die, your soul departs from your body, but if medical action is taken quickly enough, parts of the body can keep on living and enhance the life of others.

Give this concept some thought. Become a volunteer. This last unselfish act will count with the big guy in the sky when he judges you as a person.

And why not?



Honest Communication is the Answer

Supervisor Richard Schaffer is screaming bloody murder over what he claims is LIPA's attempt to build a power plant in Babylon without conferring with the town. Schaffer claims that LIPA put out a Request for Proposal naming Babylon as a potential site for a new electric generating facility.

LIPA Chairman Richard Kessel told Suffolk Life there are no plans to build a plant in Babylon. The rhetoric here sounds good, but then why was Babylon identified as a potential site? If Babylon was a site that LIPA was considering, why didn't LIPA officials confer with town officials before putting out the RFP?

LILCO was brought down by a lack of communication and lack of forthrightness more than it was by the construction of the Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant. Why is LIPA following in LILCO's footsteps? Has the management of LIPA not learned anything from LILCO's mistakes?

If there is a need to build additional power stations, why not bring the com-

munities being considered into partnership rather than spring it upon them as a fait accompli?

Honest, open communications are critical, particularly when you consider that LIPA is an Authority and is not subject to oversight and does not necessarily have to work in coordination or cooperation with local zoning and planning boards. As an Authority it has the power of eminent domain.

To at least avoid the appearance of being a bully, LIPA should reach out and fully explain its intentions and seek the cooperation of the elected officials and the community.

LILCO was once a mighty corporation that had the love and the respect of the community and their customers. LILCO lost it and became the most hated corporate symbol on Long Island. We know it may be difficult for some to speak with a straight tongue, but honesty goes a long way toward building trust.

And why not?

WILLMOTTS & WHY NOTS

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Isn't Anybody Watching?

At a Suffolk County legislative subcommittee meeting of the Ways and Means Committee, Legislator Steve Levy revealed the county has not been paid commissions on vending machines located throughout its numerous buildings.

Because of this, it may have lost (or may be owed) upwards of \$1 million.

Legislative Minority Leader George Guldi has asked for the subcommittee to be given subpoena powers to investigate this situation. This should be done.

Nobody seems to know how much is owed or, in fact, how many vending machines are on county property. Isn't anybody watching the store?

Going back to 1978, former County Executive John Klein required that any department that wanted to have a vending machine installed had to go to the Department of Public Works (DPW) to receive permission. Once it

authorized the space for the machines, the county's purchasing department was to put out bids for their installation. These required certain minimum standards and commissions that would be paid to the county.

The vending machine business has been reported to have been infiltrated by organized crime. A vendor who formerly serviced Suffolk Life repeatedly complained of organized crime tactics he encountered at several of his large accounts. He complained to the county, state and federal governments. At one time, he told us the feds were looking into his complaints and he expected action. He very unexpectedly sold his business and we have not heard from him since.

Has any county employee been

involved in this scam or was it just benign neglect? Why didn't the comptroller's office pick up on the deficit in revenue? How long have county employees or elected officials known revenues were not coming into the county and vending machine leases had been allowed to expire while the companies kept the machines in place without paying commissions?

How many other revenue sources does the county have on which it may not be collecting? Is it gross incompetence or do we have corruption within Suffolk County government?

Why hasn't the district attorney's office looked into this? The DA's office employs going after official corruption; here is a grand opportunity for it to do so.

It looks like it is up to the legislature to take the necessary action. Give it subpoena powers so no stone will be left unturned.

And why not?

Everyone Welcome

On Friday, September 24, the Peconic River Sportsman's Club (PRSC) welcomes outdoor enthusiasts to the 20th Annual Sportsman's Rally/Candidate Night. At this function, the candidates who are running for county executive, county legislature, town supervisor and town council are encouraged to attend and speak to the gathering for a few minutes. This rally gives sportsmen and political candidates an opportunity to meet one another and discuss hunting, fishing, public use of town and county-owned lands and environmental issues.

The PRSC sponsors this evening as a community service, and admission is free. The evening will start at 7 p.m. with beverages and hors d'oeuvres provided by the club.

The PRSC was once the estate of Willy Donahue. The main meeting room walls are adorned with trophies, some dating back to the early 1900s. This evening gives all Suffolk County residents an opportunity to walk back in history and to see it being made by

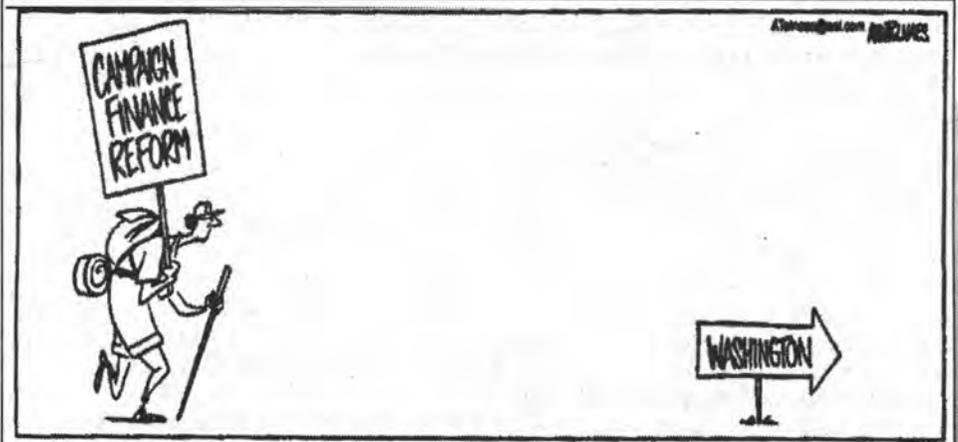
the candidates.

The PRSC is located on River Road in Calverton, directly opposite the former Grumman facility.

On Saturday, September 25, from 9 a.m. to dusk (rain date is Sunday, September 26), there is another exciting event for outdoor sportsmen. The Suffolk Alliance of Sportsmen (SAS) will hold an exhibition and display at the Department of Environmental Conservation check station, located a quarter mile west of William Floyd Parkway on Randall Road, which is 300 feet off Route 25.

The fun-filled day will include archery, bait and fly casting demonstrations, a horse show, hound and fox chase, retrieving dog demonstrations, a Rough Riders Cavalry Troop reenactment, pony rides and, of course, clowns, balloons and free face painting. The day's activities are free. It is SAS' way of commemorating National Hunting and Fishing Day. Families are welcome and encouraged to attend.

And why not?



AN 89 YEAR OLD WOMAN WALKS ACROSS THE COUNTRY



A MEMBER OF CONGRESS SKIPS ACROSS HIS OFFICE

By the Grace of God

By the grace of God, Suffolk County was spared devastation Thursday night. As the sun rose on Thursday morning in anticipation of the storm, all reports indicated that Suffolk County, and particularly the East End, would be hit by a tremendous hurricane called Floyd. The storm was more than 300 miles wide, had winds of more than 110 mph and its eye was expected to cross right over mid-Suffolk. It looked like our worst nightmare was about to happen.

Government forces were marshaled. Utilities went on high alert. Schools and businesses closed early, sending their employees home to take care of last

minute preparations and to be with their families. Even cold-hearted Wall Street closed the market at 2 p.m., allowing for an early exodus. By 5 p.m., the area was ready.

In the meantime, Floyd had weakened. The heavy rains that had been predicted fell over New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The eye of the storm crossed over Queens, and damage throughout Suffolk County was slight. The preparations we all made were time consuming and arduous, but worth the effort.

All of us should look skyward and thank God for sparing us.

And why not?

There Is Affordable Housing

Several months ago, we were in a conversation with John Powell, the former Republican leader of Suffolk County. He explained that some business people were leaning on him to have legislation passed that would have created additional subsidized, affordable housing.

Powell, perceptively, said there is plenty of affordable housing in Suffolk County. It just is not what young people want. He used his own neighborhood as an example. He said there were numerous houses within walking distance of his own home that could be bought for from \$50,000 to \$150,000.

No, Medford is not Manorville, and the homes are not located on an acre of property, but those homes are well constructed and affordable.

Powell went on to say young people are no longer looking for starter homes;

they want everything their parents could not afford and they want it now. He questioned how they could afford mortgages of \$1,000 to \$3,000 per month.

Throughout the East End, there are numerous homes that can be bought for less than \$150,000. In the western communities, there are still opportunities for those who want to buy an affordable home and put their sweat-equity into it.

Suffolk County does not need a massive housing authority building subsidized homes. What we do need is some imagination and a resolve to use our current inventory of available homes. Possibly a program of modest tax abatements for a limited number of years for first-time home buyers would help.

But, let us use what we have before we build more.

And why not?

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We had an interesting conversation with Legislator Joseph Caracappa last week during our editorial interviews. His district includes Farmingville, a small, middle-class community that has had to deal with a large immigration population.

The immigrants, mostly from Central and South America, live together, sometimes in groups of as many as 20 to 25, in single-family, three to four bedroom residences. They have not come here looking for handouts; they have come to work. They basically are day workers who are hired on a temporary basis for contracting, landscaping and other labor-intensive businesses.

They gather along Horseblock Road in Farmingville. Contractors stop, negotiate a deal, take them to the job site and return them at the end of the day. Some of these day workers have green cards, but others do not. Likewise, some of the contractors are licensed, but others are not.

The situation is dangerous because the contractors are stopping suddenly on the busy highway and are quickly surrounded by workers. Sometimes, the workers spill out onto the roadway, creating the potential for accidents. The large gathering has created fear in the community.

We had originally suggested that this sit-

No Adherence to the Law

uation could be managed if the county's Department of Labor established a hiring hall where workers could be documented and contractors checked for proper licenses and insurance. Legislator Caracappa pointed out this would only cover those who are "legit," leaving those who are not to continue avoiding the system.

Caracappa said he and other community leaders have asked the Town of Brookhaven to intervene as numerous town codes are being violated. He asked why the town has not enacted a group rental law. Southampton was able to enact one to control the summer group rentals, which was tested in court and upheld.

The Town of Riverhead also enacted a rental law that requires the landlord to obtain a permit for all rental homes. The rental must be inspected for health and safety compliance prior to the issuance of the permit. Each home can house only a limited number of tenants, depending upon the number of bedrooms. Permits are renewed annually and the homes can be reinspected before the permits are renewed.

Caracappa asked, "Why not

Brookhaven?"

He went on to say, obviously many of the day workers are working off the books. Contractors are not providing workman's compensation or unemployment insurance. Workers are evading state and federal income taxes, are getting paid in cash and probably are failing to report this income to the state and federal government. Sales tax is probably not being charged, denying the county and the state revenues they deserve.

Why aren't state and federal taxing agencies involved? How can they ignore this obvious flaunting of the law? Where is the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)? Caracappa charged that many of the day workers are here illegally, do not have green cards and legally cannot work.

This is a hot bed of illegal immigrant abuse. Caracappa and the civic leaders have reached out to the INS and the Internal Rev-

enue Service, but found themselves stonewalled. The INS claims it does not have the manpower to investigate. The agency has thrown up its hands and by its inaction is condoning such illegal practices.

Rep. Michael Forbes, Sen. Charles Schumer and Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan gave nothing more than lip service. These are our federal representatives and, for some reason, they lack the courage to become involved.

This is not just a neighborhood incident. The same problem is being repeated in different parts of Long Island, from Glen Cove to East Hampton. When our government allows illegal acts, it is part of the problem and contributes to a system of lawlessness. What is the sense of passing laws or electing lawmakers if the system allows itself to be broken down?

Representatives of every level of government should meet to develop an innovative and logical solution to this problem.

And why not?

Does Suffolk Want to Follow Nassau?

Parity is one of the most crucial themes in negotiations over equitable pay for government employees. It creates a leapfrog situation. Nassau and Suffolk counties compete on police contracts. What Nassau gives the police, Suffolk is expected to match.

Police unions use this argument very effectively when settlement questions are being decided by arbitration. The same tactics are used in negotiations with school district and municipal employees.

In the last go-around with the Nassau police unions, the county gave in and awarded the police unions a 35% increase over the life of the contract. Today, Nassau is in financial crisis. Its budget is well over \$200 million in the red. It has used up the last of its "one shot" deals and has exhausted the concept of new taxing gimmicks. The county cannot afford the government it has created, and no one has the courage to bite the bullet and come up with a budget with which the taxpayers can live.

Does Suffolk want to follow?

Suffolk County is facing negotiations with the police and municipal unions. We received a report from the Budget Review Office, addressed to Legislator Fred Towle, indicating the police unions were looking for parity with Nassau County. They want a 7% salary increase each year of a proposed five-year contract. This raise is on top of built-in steps that guarantee the police an average of a 2% to 3% increase per year.

The cost of this proposed contract would be \$220 million per year in additional expenses. This means \$220 million more in taxes that the residents of Suffolk County are going to have to pay.

With the improved economy, Suffolk

County has committed to funding a host of new programs. The county legislature and the county executive seem to believe these good economic times will go on forever.

By law, arbitrated police contracts are limited to two years in duration. Somehow, County Executive Robert Gaffney circumvented this requirement and allowed the arbitrators to set the terms of the last contract at five years. The police unions now want a new five-year contract. This is particularly dangerous as the arbitrators do not have to consider the county's ability to pay or changes in the economy.

When the state legislature enacted the binding arbitration laws, it failed to include this important caveat. This has led to outlandish increases in compensation for law enforcement officers without consideration of the heavy burden on the taxpayers.

Inflation is currently at about 2.5%. Raises should be limited to the rate of inflation with the exception of merit advances. The police unions should recognize that if a contract is going to be workable, fair to the police and fair to the taxpayers, it must take into consideration current and future economic times. If parity is to be a factor, not only should Nassau County be taken into consideration, but so should New York City and the state police.

We all know about the goose and the golden egg, and the straw that broke the camel's back. We would hope that reasonable minds are able to compromise and come up with a package that is good for the police, affordable for the taxpayers and takes into consideration today's economy as well as tomorrow's.

And why not?



Don't Blow It Off

For the past several months, residents throughout Suffolk County have been raising their voices concerning the new Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) train whistles. With the introduction of the new double-decker trains, the sounding devices were changed, allegedly to meet new federal standards. Residents who have lived by the railroad for years now find themselves being awakened from sleep and their conversations interrupted by these new whistles. These taxpayers are not only complaining about the noise level, but also about the duration of the signal.

Although residents have forcefully spoken out, the LIRR and its parent company,

the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), have been stonewalling the issue. This is wrong, for the whistles are interfering with the residents' quality of life.

If the former decibel level was adequate, why impose a harsher and meaner sound on the residents? Why not set standards on how often and how long the signals may be used and make sure they are enforced?

We encourage the MTA to address this problem now before it becomes necessary for county, state or federal hearings to be called. There has to be a common sense approach to the problem.

And why not?