

# WILLMOTTS & WHY NOTS

DAVID J. WILLMOTT SR., EDITOR

## The Basis of Education

We hope all parents read the results of the fourth grade test on reading recently released by the state. Between 30% and 40% of the students tested are in trouble. This is frightening because if students cannot read on the proper grade level by the time they are in the third grade, they are doomed to a lifetime of frustration and underachievement in almost every situation they will encounter.

The parents of those students who took the test will be provided with their child's individual scores by their school district. Students who do not measure up to the standard will need help. Districts are being left to ponder how they can provide this extra help, and how they will fund it.

Parents must be willing to dedicate the time and effort to work with their own

children in teaching them how to read. Unfortunately, many parents have difficulty reading themselves. They are part of the generation brought up under the whole language method of reading.

Before the late fifties, most students were taught to read phonetically. Roughly speaking, phonics involves the sounding out of letters, and letter combinations or blends. From the basic foundation of 26 letters and approximately 44 sound combinations, a student can be taught to recognize any word, sound out that word, and decode its meaning within the context of a sentence, paragraph or page of written text.

Through redundant exercises, those students learned their sounds and how to

put the letters together to form these sounds. It was tedious. It was drudgery, but it worked.

Over the last four decades, phonics has been dumped in favor of the whole language method. Whole language was designed to immerse students in reading as part of every aspect of instruction. It assumes too greatly that the student possesses ample meaning and background knowledge of how language works.

Whole language was an experiment in social engineering that has not been as successful as expected. The educational and political establishments, instead of accepting failure, have pushed ahead, ignoring the results of years of testing.

The most recent results show us that

our students have a 30% to 40% failure rate. This tells us loud and clear what we have been doing has been wrong, at least for a large portion of students. Without acting, we have doomed many of our children to failure.

We encourage parents, whose children are having trouble reading, to get their children help from professionals who specialize in phonetic methods.

For parents who will have children heading off to elementary school for the first time, invest in the home reading programs that are based on phonics. It will give the children the head start they will need and an ability to read by the time they start first grade.

We can no longer act like ostriches. We must not ignore the obvious. This situation must be corrected.

And why not?

## Two Annual Pleas

This is the 26th year we have pleaded with the various town governments throughout Suffolk County to enter into a reciprocal beach permitting system with companion towns.

Except for Brookhaven Town, no other town has beaches located on both the ocean and the Sound.

Without reciprocal beach permits, you cannot enjoy the ocean beaches if you live on the North Shore. And, if you live on the South Shore, you cannot take advantage of the Long Island Sound beaches.

Both beach fronts are beautiful, unique and different as is the salinity and temperature of the waters. The contours of the beaches range from absolute sand on the South Shore to stunning rock and boulder configurations predominately found on the North Shore.

Reciprocal permits would not be a financial burden on any individual town. Yet, area residents would be able to double their recreational opportunities. Why can't common sense prevail?

Speaking of common sense, we should use it, especially pertaining to the influx of traffic we will be experiencing this summer. Courtesy pertains to both residents and visitors.

Over the years we have observed more aggressive behavior during the summer months in both natives and visitors. This particularly manifests itself on

the roads; traffic increases and it takes us longer to get from one place to another. None of us are going to get there any faster by driving recklessly or being discourteous. Tailgating, flashing lights, horn blowing and verbal abuse will not move the traffic faster than the slowest vehicle. Crossing over double lines to pass, or passing on the right are only recipes for an early funeral or a huge medical bill.

We know that at times it is difficult to be polite and courteous when in the company of obnoxious, rude and arrogant people. You want to do onto others as they are doing onto you.

But try a bit of humor. When someone approaches you with a scowl on his or her face, ask them, "Isn't it a wonderful day to smile?" If someone tries to push ahead of you in line, simply smile and say, "That's what I love about the country — everyone is polite and courteous. Do not you agree?"

There are all kinds of fast come backs that you can make to give a tense situation a little levity.

Let us keep in mind that even the most obnoxious of visitors are our guests. A little humor, a little courtesy may help them to leave their attitudes in Manhattan and enjoy what they come here for.

Be aware. They're here.  
And why not?

## Get Rid of Additives

A couple of years back, the federal government ordered that a chemical, MTBE, be added to gasoline. At the time it was claimed the chemical would aid the environment. As an oxygenating compound it was supposed to make gasoline burn more completely, thus reducing pollution.

A recent survey disclosed that MTBE had insignificant and negligible effects and did not improve air quality; in fact, it may be a detriment to the ecology and have bad side effects.

The additive added a cent or two per gallon to the cost of gasoline. We noted on our own car it also had a side effect of reducing gas mileage. Some other drivers to whom we spoke, who systematically check their mileage, indicated they were getting the same results.

The EPA should drop the requirement for this additive before the start of the next winter season. For once, the bureaucracy should move fast and bring us relief before winter.

And why not?



## Two Faces of the Clock

Under New York law, the state budget is supposed to be adopted by midnight on March 31, every year. The state's legislative leaders circumvented this law by stopping the legislative clock at 11:59 p.m. on March 31, 1999.

Technically, April 1 has not arrived in Albany. And, for the past two months, legislators have not received paychecks. No work, no pay. The exception is that obviously state government must continue to operate and non-elected state employees continue to receive their paychecks.

The problem is that legislators' failure to adopt a budget has ramifications that go beyond Albany. School districts and contract agencies have not received state aid or funding since the clock was stopped. The bad face of the clock is that school districts and agencies have had to borrow against their anticipated state funds. This will raise homeowners' taxes because monies will have to be spent unnecessarily on interest.

On the good face of the clock is Governor George Pataki's refusal to give in to Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver's demands to spend not only the surplus money, but to spend more than is anticipated to be raised through the current taxing systems.

In some previous years, Pataki gave in to Silver and accepted his budget. Surpluses that could have been used to reduce taxes were spent on a host of nonessential programs.

By law, the legislature will not receive paychecks until the budget is passed, so the pressure is building for a quick compromise. Pataki has indicated he will hold out as long as necessary to achieve a prudent budget.

We will see if he is a man of his word or if he will give in at the eleventh hour and accept a pork barrel budget.

We expect him to stand his ground and deliver his promise.

And why not?

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## The Good and Bad Of A First Year

The first year under the thumb of the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA) has been interesting.

As promised by our state politicians and LIPA chairman Richie Kessel, the ratepayers of Long Island have seen a serious reduction in their electric rates, but at what cost?

By selling additional bonds through Wall Street, LIPA borrowed the money to reduce the rates, which is fine until those bonds have to be paid back with accumulated interest.

Kessel also promised to work with local government and school districts to ease them away from the PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) funds that LILCO once paid on a regular basis. But instead of working with local officials, LIPA has pursued litigation against Suffolk County in an attempt to collect over \$400 million that was paid last year in PILOT money.

LIPA agreed not to pursue the collection of money LILCO claimed it was owed because of property over-assessments before the company was purchased by the state-owned utility, except for the \$1.2 billion settlement plus interest on LILCO's Shoreham nuclear power plant.

Kessel claims LIPA has done Suffolk residents a favor by reducing the Shoreham debt from \$1.2 billion to \$625 million.

What he neglects to mention is that LIPA "forgave" all of Nassau's over-assessments, and gave Nassau residents a higher refund than Suffolk. In addition, he keeps ignoring the fact that the state legislation, which created LIPA, specifically prohibits LIPA or any other agency or utility from collecting on any of those certiorari settlements.

Despite this, he and the LIPA trustees continue to fight Suffolk for money that is not due them. They keep wasting ratepayer money on high-priced lawyers and forcing Suffolk County to spend additional money on its defense.

Kessel has gone on and on about how Suffolk County should stop being aversarial with LIPA and that Shoreham should be put behind us all.

Well, Rich, that is a good idea and we hope that you and the LIPA trustees will make it a goal in your second year to be less litigious when it comes to Suffolk residents, that you agree to permanently put Shoreham behind us all by withdrawing from the lawsuits and appeals you have

filed against Suffolk.

Another goal for the second year would be to honestly provide a mechanism for real competition. LIPA's "Long Island Choice" program offered the businesses and residents of Long Island nothing new. KeySpan and Con Edison have offered empty promises through this program because they cannot provide any real competition against LIPA because of LIPA's exorbitant transmission and distribution charges.

Long Island Choice is a good public relations ploy that has a long way to go before the ratepayers will benefit.

One way LIPA could provide true competition for all of Long Island is to convince our state representatives to pass legislation that would prohibit exit fees from being imposed on utility costumers who wish to switch from one company to another.

Republican State Senator Owen Johnson of Babylon promised to introduce and support such legislation, as did Democratic Assemblyman Steven Englebright of

Setauket. The two have worked together on the legislation and expect passage within the next couple of weeks. These two state legislators should be complimented for their effort to protect the state's ratepayers.

There would be little that could hold this legislation back if LIPA endorsed it and convinced other state officials to do the same. Richie Kessel has always touted himself as a consumer advocate. Here is a clear opportunity for him to demonstrate to the public that he is on the side of the consumer. He has promised LIPA would not impose any exit fees. The problem is that he can be replaced as chairman of LIPA and the trustees can be replaced as well. Their promise means nothing to another board of trustees.

If Richie Kessel and the current LIPA trustees truly want to accomplish great things in their second year, cut the litigation and promote real competition by banning exit fees.

And why not?

## Court Overrules Legislative Intent

Last December, the New York State Legislature wanted to increase the salaries of its members by almost a third. Governor George Pataki agreed to these increases providing the legislators agreed that, if the budget was not passed by March 31, 1999, their salaries would be suspended. Upon passage of the budget, the legislators would be paid retroactively.

Every legislator who took office on January 1, 1999 accepted this condition of employment as a provision of his or her contract with the people of the State of New York.

In January, the governor proposed a budget. The legislature and its leaders had three months to debate it. Instead of getting down to serious negotiations, they sat on their duffs and played politics. It is the fault of these legislators that they did not come up with a budget through honest and productive negotiations.

Now they arrogantly claim that the suspension of their salaries has denied them and their families needed medical care and has caused undue personal hardship. They argued that the nonpayment of their salaries is a weapon being used by the governor to force the passage of the governor's budget.

This is pure hogwash, but the courts have bought into it and ruled in favor of the legislators — the very same people who supported this measure last year.

The governor is appealing the court's decision. The governor should argue that this was a known provision of the legislators' employment contract. No legislator

had to accept the job; they were free to refuse it.

Because there is no budget in place, school districts and special agencies are forced to borrow against the belief that the state aid will be forthcoming. The banks are all too willing to lend the districts money and collect the interest payments.

Legislators who are crying poverty can do exactly the same. When the budget is passed, they will get their paychecks. They can pledge these paychecks as collateral and there is not a banker from Buffalo to Montauk who would withhold a loan with this kind of collateral.

The legislators are the men and women we elected to make state government work. They have failed in their responsibilities. Why shouldn't they have to feel the pain the same way the citizens and the taxpayers do?

The New York State budgetary process has been a disgrace for 15 years. Once in Albany, the legislators as a whole do not give a whit about their constituents. It is business as usual; going along to get along. Only now that they are personally being affected have they taken action. It is action for the wrong reasons. It is self serving and violates the spirit of the pay agreement.

The legislators should not be able to have it both ways. They are cheating the people. The last thing we need is representatives in Albany who are dishonest. Pataki should argue hard on this appeal and while in court find a way to throw out the legislators' raises.

And why not?



## Political Solution to A Real Problem

Legislator Joseph Caracappa last week introduced a bill to address the practice of hiring immigrants who gather in Farmingville seeking work. Caracappa proposed that any contractor who stops and solicits employees will be in violation of the law.

There is no question that the immigrants who gather in Farmingville are a problem to the community. The problem is as much about perception as it is about reality.

Caracappa claims this is not an anti-immigrant bill. He is doing it to protect the safety and welfare of those seeking work. One immigrant was slightly injured in an accident when he ran in front of a car, and Caracappa is using this to justify his bill. He claims it is a safety measure. This is a disguise for raw prejudice. It has nothing to do with safety. It's a political solution to a real problem.

The City of Glen Cove attempted a similar dodge and it was thrown out as

unconstitutional. Glen Cove then did the right thing — which we had suggested in an editorial on the subject a few months back. They established a hiring hall where contractors could list their available jobs. Workers could meet in an orderly fashion and agree upon terms and conditions. Contractors would have to provide copies of their licenses and prove that they are legitimately in business. Immigrant workers would have to show identification and green cards. The contractors would be compelled to withhold the appropriate taxes. This would be an orderly process.

In the past, Caracappa has shown common sense but he has come up very short on this one. It's not too late for him to redeem himself with his constituents and the residents at large.

Caracappa should withdraw his bill and submit a bill creating a hiring hall or a hiring area convenient to the contractors and the workers but outside of a residential area.

And why not?

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## A Dog's Best Friend — Cat's Too

## Kent Celebrates 30th Anniversary

Over the past 30 years, more than 20,000 dogs and cats found a haven from impending death at the Kent Animal Shelter in Calverton.

The shelter provided a lifeline for dogs and cats that were put up for adoption, abandoned or considered discards. At Kent they find a wonderful, loving staff that provides care, nourishment, love and does everything in its power to unite these animals with proper owners.

Throughout the years, we personally have adopted dogs out of Kent, ranging from a shaggy mutt who provided her owners with absolute love, trust and protection, to our current dog, Bear, a big, lovable, chocolate Labrador who had been abused by his previous owners. When Bear came to us at two years of age he was a sorrowful sight. He had a gray muzzle like a 10-year old and didn't even have the

ability or the desire to wag his tail. He could not bark; his vocal cords were impaired, we suspect, from the improper use of an electronic training collar.

With gentle loving care he has turned out to be one of the best dogs we have ever had. Thousands of other people have experienced the same joy from adopting one of Kent's visitors.

These dogs and cats range from pure breeds to the Heinz 57 variety. All adoptees have been neutered or spayed. They have received their latest shots and have been wormed. They have been checked by a veterinarian and are ready for new owners.

If you are seriously considering acquiring a dog or a cat as a pet, why buy a pure breed or a dog from a puppy mill that may have been poorly

bred? Kent and the other animal shelters have hundreds of dogs and cats available for adoption.

Yes, they do check on your background to make sure you can provide a proper home. And they ask for a small donation to cover some of the costs of vet care for the dog.

The personnel at Kent work there out of love. They truly care about animals and want to make a difference in this indifferent world. Kent is supported by a foundation and the contributions from the community. It needs every dollar it can get.

If you would like to attend a fundraiser this summer that will truly make you feel good, Kent is sponsoring its anniversary party at Palmer Vineyards on the North Fork on July 31. The evening is entitled "A Taste of the North Fork." It promises to be a great party and it is for a wonderful cause. This fund raiser is worthy of your support. The folks at Kent have been giving to the community for 30 years. It is our turn to give back.

We salute the Kent Animal Shelter and its dedicated personnel for their love and humanity for dogs, cats and people.

And why not?

## Think Before You Act

In the wake of Columbine, Congress is considering enacting a new set of gun laws. They are acting out of emotion, responding to a spin by the media and the liberal gun control advocates.

More than 100 million responsible Americans own a firearm. The most common are shotguns and rifles which are used for hunting and the popular sports shooting.

Many citizens own pistols for their own protection. Some are managers who must transport large sums of cash. Others are in the professions where their lives have been threatened. In some states, it is legal to carry a firearm and, ironically, in those states attacks on people have dropped.

In the United States, there are factions that do not believe that any law-abiding citizen should be able to possess a firearm. The Second Amendment of our Constitution gives us the constitutional right to bear arms. The anti-gun faction knows that an attempt to repeal the Second Amendment is highly improbable. They have set their goals lower. They are attempting to use the law to take guns away from honest citizens. They want to compile a national registry of every gun owner and of every gun. They want to impose federal licensing of all firearms. They want to impose a tax that would be set by the bureaucracy on the licensing and possession of firearms. Once they have the right to set these fees, they can raise them so high that people will no longer be able to afford to own a firearm.

Several years ago, the Brady Bill was passed, requiring a background check on individuals before they could purchase a firearm. Unfortunately, the bureaucracy was not able to effectively or efficiently conduct these checks. Other provisions of the bill made it a federal crime to display a gun in the commission of a crime, to actually shoot the gun or to injure or kill someone in the commission of a crime. Violations of these laws carried mandatory sentencing,

including execution of anyone who used a gun in the commission of a crime where someone was killed.

The National Rifle Association, a gun owner's association, strongly supported and actively lobbied for these common sense, mandatory, sentencing provisions.

But again, the federal government has dropped the ball. Although there are thousands of crimes which have been committed that meet the criteria for federal prosecution, less than a dozen have been prosecuted under the federal laws. There are hundreds of other laws on the books both on the federal and state levels; yet, this stops no one from illegally buying or using a firearm. Why aren't these laws being enforced?

Columbine revved up the anti-gun crowd which has consistently ignored the fact that the perpetrators also set off bombs that injured people. If those bombs had been more strategically placed they would have killed hundreds.

A few days after the Columbine tragedy, a New Jersey man butchered his wife and children with a knife. Nary a howl of protest was heard. Wasn't the knife just as lethal as the gun?

All the laws on the books will not take guns out of the hands of criminals. Our best bet is to have realistic laws mandating training and the understanding of weapons. Laws that are vague and subject to interpretation place too much power in the hands of the bureaucrats, and such power can be used to diminish our freedoms.

If someone does not choose to own a gun that is his or her choice. The Constitution gives, to those who choose to own a weapon, the right to do so. Don't let your freedoms be given away, taxed away or eroded in any way. Contact your congressman and demand that he oppose the gun bill currently before Congress.

And why not?

## Picking the President...



## Happy Father's Day

Many of Suffolk's dads should be extra proud of their offspring this Father's Day. Their children took the time to nominate them for Suffolk Life's Father of the Year.

Our staff had a difficult time picking the winners as almost every letter gave a very substantial reason why the writer's dad should be singled out for this honor.

Most men do not show very much sentimentality. It is not normally encouraged by our culture. Men, even sensitive men, are brought up to appear tough, to roll with the punches and not allow themselves to display too much emotion. They are often brought up to believe that the responsibilities for the family are on their shoulders.

Many men work 60 to 70 hours per week at their primary jobs; others work two jobs to try and make ends meet. They also have their homes to maintain and want to spend time with their children. Today, roles have changed to some degree and many more women are con-

tributing financially to the home.

We are living in an on-the-go society where luxuries are now considered necessities. Many of us consider this tragic, but we are powerless to change the direction of a culture that is snowballing. We have to learn to live with life as it is.

Even with all the demands that are placed upon men, many find the time to be good listeners, to encourage, to explain, to teach and, yes, to discipline. Most importantly, they love their children. They may not overly demonstrate that love but it is there.

As you reflect on Father's Day, think about those thankless sacrifices your dad has made for you. Although it is too late to nominate him to be Suffolk Life's Father of the Year, it is not too late for you to remember him with a surprise gift, a note that you wrote, a phone call or a big hug and kiss.

Just remember him and thank him. He'll appreciate it.

And why not?

# WILLMOTT & WHY NOTS

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## ME GA Feds Tell New York - Change Rules or Lose the Juice

Special education programs in New York State schools have grown at an alarming rate. The federal government has taken note and ordered the state to change the rules or lose up to \$335 million in federal special education funding.

New York State qualifies a much higher percentage of children for special education than other states. Is it need or greed? The feds think it is greed and want New York to rein in its program.

In examining school spending, Suffolk Life reported almost a decade ago that special education on Long Island was out of control. Although we had only 13% of the state's population, we were absorbing more than 75% of state special education dollars.

Further investigation revealed that those who administered tests to determine eligibility were also the providers of the

remedial services. Children were not being independently tested and were being placed in inappropriate programs. Some students could have been kept in normal classroom environments.

The special agencies that provide the services are generally independent of the schools. They are in the business of providing special services. The more students they service the higher their income.

Children placed in special education programs are labeled for life. The costs of these programs are often 100% more than the tuition paid for a regular school. Special education is legitimately needed by some students. These are the ones who are severely disabled, but can function with the proper training. There are those students who are so severely disabled and will never be able to function in society.

There are students with minor impair-

ments who have been warehoused in these programs. They have minor disabilities such as speech impairments or a slight hearing or other sight problems, but some of those problems can be corrected with glasses, hearing aides, or remedial services without locking the students into a lifetime of special education. Such students receive little benefit and they are a drain on the system.

The feds recognize that New York State has been too liberal with this program and has threatened to cut off funding within two months unless the rules for qualifying are changed.

State governments have a history of listening to the special interest groups. The teachers' unions and their affiliates, the special education providers have very strong lobbies. Even though it would have been right, the legislature has not bucked them and instead has rolled over to their demands.

The feds have now stepped in and told them to change the rules or we will end the juice. This will hurt the children who are legitimately in need. It's time for the governor and the legislature to fish or cut bait.

And why not?

## To Spray Or Not To Spray

The state is considering legislation that would require homeowners to give their surrounding neighbors a 48-hour notification when they intend to spray their property with chemicals. Pesticides are chemicals for lawn, tree and shrub care that reportedly can contain cancer-causing agents.

Just about everybody in suburbia wants the greenest lawn and a bug-free environment. The wholesale application of chemicals may make your lawn and shrubs look green, but what good is it if the green is over your head because you are dead from the side effects?

Personally, we would just as soon see Mother Nature take her course, turning the grass green in the spring. If some bugs want to have a free meal, so be it.

If you allow the birds and insects to survive, they will keep the pest populations controlled.

Sure, once in a while you are going to have to seed and give your grass and shrubs a push with a light dusting of fertilizer, but organic material is always an option.

If each of us decides we would prefer to be on Mother Nature's side instead of the undertakers by limiting our use of chemicals and pesticides, we would be joining hands together to make Long Island an environmentally safe place to live.

Do you value your health more than the greenest lawn in the neighborhood? The choice is yours.

And why not?



## A Shining Example - Berger To Retire

In the swamp of politics and government there occasionally arises a bright ray of sunshine, a true public servant. For years, Suffolk Life has considered the Republican Commissioner of the Board of Elections, Gerald Berger, such a shining light. Suffolk County will lose this fine gentleman on July 4, Independence Day, to retirement.

We first met Berger when he was deputy commissioner at the Board of Elections. He was deputy only in name. He ran the Republican side of the office. Traditionally, the commissioner has been a political hack, more absent than present and, when present, because of a lack of knowledge about how the office functioned, more in the way than not.

When Berger's predecessor announced he was leaving, it appeared that history would repeat itself, but pressure built for Berger to be appointed. The county Republican leader at that time was Howard DiMartini. He put aside politics and appointed the best man for the job.

Berger immediately established a working relationship with his Democratic counterpart, Gerald Edelstein. They agreed that although it was a partisan office, they would take down the walls separating the Republicans from the Democrats and would run the

office honestly, fairly and effectively for the people of Suffolk County.

Through Berger's leadership and executive skills, the office was brought into the 20th century. It was computerized and modernized. It has been pointed out as an example for other boards to emulate.

Berger's dream has always been that people could vote from their homes using computers. Polling booths would be computerized so that winners could be announced a few minutes after the polls were closed. Berger's dream will not come to fruition before he retires, but the ground work that he has laid will ease the Board of Elections into this next step of advanced communication.

Gerry established a work ethic at the board. He gave it his all and expected those who had political appointments to do the same. He became a legend in government in his own time.

Suffolk County will dearly miss him and we can only hope that his successor will carry on in the Berger tradition and not allow the board to become polarized, sinking back into that political swamp.

We wish the Bergers a wonderful retirement and hope Florida is everything they have dreamed it would be.

And why not?

## The Games They Play

There is a game elected officials play in your hometown which is wasting thousands of dollars of your hard earned cash. The game goes like this. The current town board does not have the funds to meet the needs of the politicians who run the town. The politicians do not want the voters to know that they have over-spent and might have to borrow money; so, they use the back door. They have the assessors determine property values at the highest possible figure.

This is what Brookhaven Town did with Shoreham. LILCO sued and won the devastating \$1.2 billion certiorari award. The same scenario takes place in every town on both private and commercial properties.

Landowners who are aware of this, either file certiorari grievances or they sue the town for being over-assessed. Homeowners have been winning more and more certiorari suits, forcing the town to reduce their

tax assessment and refund the land owners for the over-assessment. The same holds true on commercial properties, except the numbers are much greater.

The towns are faced with paying back the over-assessments with interest, which is wasted tax money. To cover these charge-backs, the towns are often forced to bond out these expenses. This results in more wasted money and diminishes the credit worthiness of the municipality and that means even higher interest rates and unnecessary borrowing in the future.

This little game is bad government. It costs all of us higher assessments and wasted taxes.

This coming November, assessors as well as council members and supervisors will be running for office. Voters should ask those candidates about these issue and get a commitment that it will stop.

And why not?

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## This is Our Independence Day

July 4, 1999, commemorates America's independence from tyranny, and taxation without representation. This day represents a throwing off of the shackles imposed by a foreign government.

On Independence Day, we celebrate our right to be free in our pursuit of life, liberty and happiness; to freely think, to openly say or write what we believe; to pray and praise God in any way we see fit. We are free to move at the drop of a hat. We are not required to be part of a national registry where all our personal and confidential information is kept by the government and contained on our identification cards.

We are allowed to bear arms to protect ourselves or use them for sporting purposes. These and other rights are granted to us by our Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Unfortunately, most Americans take these rights for granted. One only has to visit a foreign country to begin to understand the oppressiveness under which most of the world lives.

Our shores are being flooded by

immigrants who know all too well the restrictions put on human beings in the countries they have left behind. Yes, many of these immigrants have come here for economic benefit, but if you take the time to discuss why they chose America, they often mention freedom as the main reason.

We wish we could say on this Independence Day that our freedoms will go on forever and big government is our best friend. Unfortunately, our apathy is allowing our freedoms to be eroded. Piece by piece, new restrictions and regulations are put into law by both bureaucrats and by uninformed voters supporting candidates who cater to the special interest groups that are highly vocal and organized.

Some of our regulations border on the confiscation of our Constitutional rights. This is particularly true in overzealous environmental and zoning laws that eliminate the practical use of property. As you go up the ladder of government, each branch imposes new laws. They affect everyday life —

from the foods we eat to the medical care we seek.

Supposedly, these regulations are passed for the good of all people, but too often, these rules and regulations are driven by greed and special interests groups that wish to impose their will on us.

We encourage every American to take a little bit of time out of this holiday

to read our Constitution and our Bill of Rights. Be ever vigilant when new laws are proposed. Do not hesitate to speak out. Apathy and ignorance are the only things that will douse the flames of liberty and freedom. We love America and we understand our responsibility to be ever involved and vigilant.

Happy Fourth of July.  
And why not?

## Buying Elected Officials?

Wait a minute!

Can you believe this? There are some LIPA trustees advocating the use of funds recovered through the \$1.2 billion Shoreham certiorari award, given to LILCO, to buy the loyalty of members of the Suffolk County Legislature?

Whoa! Who do these guys think they are?

In a letter written to LIPA chairman Richard Kessel last week, LIPA Trustee Michael Faltischek (a Nassau resident) expresses sorrow that LIPA has not crushed the spirit of our county legislators who have been judiciously defending Suffolk rate payers from being ripped off yet again by Long Island's electric monopoly.

Kessel, who also lives in Nassau, actually had the audacity to read this letter into the record last week before the Suffolk Legislature's Energy Committee.

Faltischek went on to say that, if any of the Shoreham certiorari award were recovered by LIPA, he would support LIPA "using portions of this recovery to fund the political campaigns of rational candidates for the Suffolk County Legislature."

Whoa! They are advocating using the public's money to financially support candidates who would be loyal to LIPA?

If any of this money is recovered by LIPA, it is money that belongs to the ratepayers, not LIPA, and this money should be returned directly to those ratepayers.

But instead, we have a LIPA

trustee advocating using a portion of that money — our money — to unseat current legislators because they are not in step with LIPA and its spurious agenda to maintain an electric monopoly on Long Island. If this is not incredible enough, we then have the chairman of LIPA reading such a scandalous letter into the official record at a county energy committee meeting.

What are they thinking?

More importantly, the LIPA legislation which created this new and arrogant electric monopoly specifically prohibits LIPA, the state, the county or anyone else from collecting any of LILCO's certiorari suits. That was part of the LILCO-LIPA buyout endorsed by the state.

In addition, Suffolk Supreme Court Judge John J.J. Jones ruled in March that the LIPA legislation "grants unqualified immunity to the taxing jurisdictions from the payment of tax refunds...." He further stated that LIPA is "exempted ... from the payment of any taxes upon the property acquired from LILCO."

There is no question as to what Judge Jones was saying. He defended the rights of Suffolk's ratepayers and its taxpayers. LIPA has no legal right to any tax money that was due LILCO.

LIPA's antics have become ludicrous and border on incompetent.

The Suffolk Legislature must continue to fight these inept robber barons, and the public should become outraged by LIPA's unrelenting shenanigans.

And why not?



## Did We Get Taken?

During the discussion period on the LIPA bailout of LILCO, we devoted a lot of space in this paper to the good, the bad and the ugly of the deal. We attempted to educate every citizen in Suffolk County on the nuances that would affect them. We opposed the deal because we felt it was not in the best financial interest of the taxpayers or the ratepayers. We lost. We hoped that we would not be in a position of having to write about this subject again. Yet, as we warned, we have been taken, flimflammed.

This past week an 18% share in the upstate nuclear power plant Nine Mile II was sold by the New York State Electric Gas Company to AmerGen for \$27.9 million.

LIPA paid LILCO \$663 million for this liability that they categorized as an asset. LIPA paid 30 times what the market value was for this property.

We warned that not only was the agreed upon price excessive, but buying LILCO's 18% share committed us to purchasing 18% of the electrical output of this nuclear power plant.

The plant generates the most expensive electricity LIPA buys. Because of this ill-conceived investment, we purchase electricity from the plant at around 11-cents a kilowatt hour. Electricity generated by the older LIPA fossil fuel plants costs 2- to 3-cents per kilowatt hour to generate.

In addition to the fiercely expensive electricity from Nine Mile II, we have the liability of paying for the decommissioning of

the plant. It has been estimated that the cost of decommissioning an active nuclear power plant will exceed the cost of construction.

LIPA Chairman Richard Kessel was recently quoted as saying that LIPA would consider any offer for its share of the plant. Does this mean that if AmerGen offers LIPA \$27.9 million that it just paid, that LIPA would sell? What will this loss do to the electrical rates?

Kessel defended LIPA's exorbitant payment by saying that it was all part of the deal and it was just the way that they applied the numbers that created the value. He went on to say that LIPA valued the Shoreham tax judgment at zero.

Suffolk County recently won a court case disallowing LIPA from collecting the Shoreham tax judgment. The legislation which created LIPA specifically stated that LIPA would not have the ability to collect any judgment and all certiorari suits would be ended.

Kessel and company have put their own spin on this, claiming that the Shoreham tax judgment is an asset to which they are entitled. As Kessel has stated, LILCO valued the asset at zero. How can LIPA mysteriously claim that it is worth \$1.4 billion? Plain and simple, we have been taken and this is just the first revelation.

We must now put an end to this swindle once and for all.

And why not?