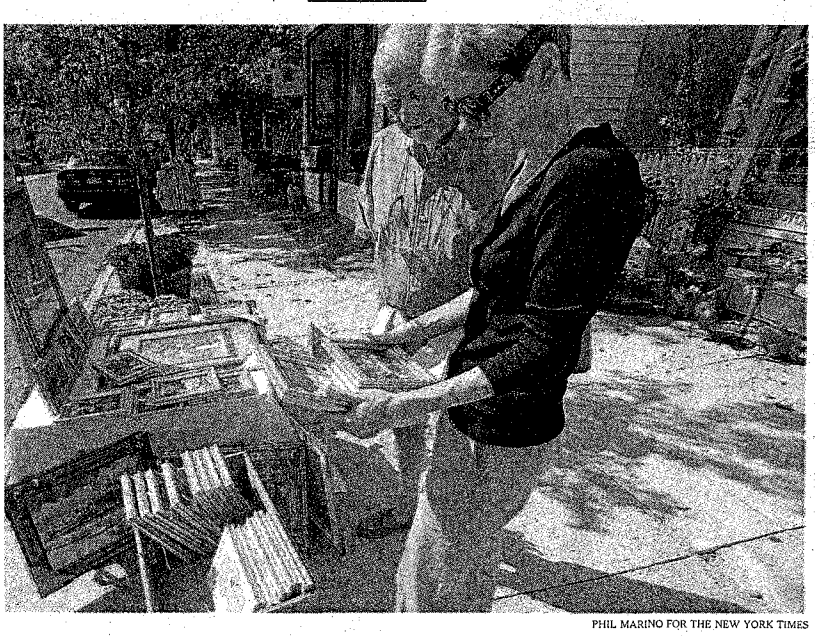
the big difference between the Spitzer and ations is that under the previous governor kept under lock and key.

Spitzer's staff was clumsy in trying to get ompile documents that could — or should — uno. But it is also possible that their efforts ter than Mr. Spitzer's foes make them sound aimed chiefly at transparency, by bringing rds that should have been public all along.

from the old guard. Play by our rules, they seem to be saying, or we will bring you down.

Legislators are planning to return soon to Albany where a campaign finance reform agreement is still in limbo. The reform is not perfect, but it is an improvement over the sloppy way campaign money is being handed out now in New York. Lawmakers should not let "Troopergate" or any other diversion distract them from more important tasks — like finally cutting off Albany's golden spigot.

PHOTO-OP



PHIL MARINO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Cold Spring Harbor, Oct. 8.

IN OTHER WORDS

Commentary from around Long Island

Keep Suffolk Wild

suburbs we relish every bit of countryside

pace of development over the last few years, at countryside will remain for future generain. Our own Brookhaven Town, far and away nship in New York State, is left with only developed acres. Should this land be develasily add 100,000 new residents. With town ady approaching half a million, we could be g density.

e as much of the remaining land as possible, roposed a 2 percent transfer tax on home d by the purchaser. Moneys would be paid ity Preservation Fund, and be used to ac-. The issue will be on the ballot next month. some controversy, with opposition from real Similar funds have been in place in the East for several years, resulting in the preserva-00 acres.

me who's lived a good while in this area, I've eady disappearance of open space. "Open ile phrase, until you start thinking of it in nds, and farms and meadows — as vistas, eal to the eye and the spirit.

in Setauket, the Detmer farm on Route 25A le of the merit of land preservation. Before it r public ownership, the site was proposed ving community, a high density project. Visave destroyed a sweeping vista of farmland nas enjoyed for generations.

in Nassau, lies an overdeveloped, overbuilt pace is left. Nassau has had the same six ul weather. But without open space, without is cramped, the atmosphere sterile. As de- forward, Nassau's leaders missed the boat concerning land preservation. In Suffolk, we must continue to preserve. There will be no second chance.

— *JOHN MCKINNEY*

Times Beacon Record Newspapers, Setauket, Oct. 4

The Perfect Ferry Building

If we are going to have a ferry terminal in Glen Cove, it should be where the previous terminal was located. The fact that Urbitran relocated the terminal further into the harbor so as not to disturb the residents of Sea Cliff adds insult to injury. It appears there is no concern about the impact for those of us who live near Shore Road. It's our hard-earned taxes, not taxes from Sea Cliff, that will be used to pay for this project.

It seems more logical to build a smaller terminal with plans for future expansion, if and when the ferry succeeds.

In Port Jefferson, for example, the ferry blends into the downtown area with its shopping and restaurants; it does not overpower them.

If we want to make the Glen Cove ferry a success, we have to provide something more than just a monstrous ferry terminal that is out of character for our city. We have to encourage residents and visitors to come and stay for a while at the waterfront, whether or not they are taking the ferry to New York City.

I would love to see a harbor that has the look and feel of a turn-of-the-century waterfront village, with cobblestone walks, gaslights, shopping, activities and restaurants. Why can't we create an inviting environment that encourages people to come to our harbor, enjoy both indoor and outdoor activities, and then go to a cafe or restaurant? Why not build something that is aesthetically pleasing to look at and that will blend in with the harbor, instead of overwhelming it?

— *BARBARA HALL*

Glen Cove Record Pilot, Oct. 5

OP-ED

The Risk Pool

By Claudia Gryvatz Copquin

NORTHPORT

DESPITE much talk about the need for a bill mandating swimming pool alarms to keep children from drowning, the Suffolk County Legislature last month passed a grossly diluted piece of legislation — one that has nothing at all to do with safety devices but instead calls for a paltry public education campaign.

After a child drowned in a swimming pool at a Cutchogue motel in the summer of 2006, a Huntington legislator, Jon Cooper, introduced a bill requiring lifeguards at larger pools at hotels and motels in the county. That was tabled, he said in an interview, because he later learned the bigger problem was residential pool drownings.

So last April, Mr. Cooper introduced a new piece of legislation, this one mandating alarms, which sound when water is displaced by a sudden weight change, in all backyard swimming pools. When just two months later a 3-year-old Shirley boy named Anthony Muniz drowned at a neighbor's pool, Mr. Cooper called his bill "Anthony's Law," with members of the child's family standing by in support at a public hearing.

That news and police reports describe little Anthony as having been routinely escaping from his house, wandering around his neighborhood sometimes clad only in diapers, and equally at risk of getting run over by a car, kidnapped or mauled by a dog, would seem to make him a curious, if no less tragic, namesake for Mr. Cooper's bill. Not to mention the fact that the pool in question was properly fenced. Or that just one day before he drowned, the boy's life was saved by a neighbor who spotted Anthony climbing down the pool steps in the house next door. Unfortunately, the very next day an unsupervised Anthony once again let himself out of his house, returned to the same pool and drowned.

It's impossible to guess if an alarm might have saved Anthony's short life, but legislation requiring alarms in every pool in Suffolk county, especially when coupled with a high-profile public safety campaign, might save the lives of other children. But that's not the bill that passed unanimously in the legislature.

As it turns out, in New York State, pool alarms already became mandatory last year — for new or renovated pools. Mr. Cooper's April bill aimed to include older pools in Suffolk County, but he tabled that version in part because the county's health department reported that only a fraction of drownings would be prevented by pool alarms. So the legislature agreed to a bill that doesn't include alarms at all. In fact, this bill doesn't require constituents to dig into their pockets, or do much of anything.

Instead, it relies on children themselves. The new bill focuses on public education via a "Be Pool Smart" campaign that calls on elementary school students to create posters. The winner's artwork will be slapped on the cover of pool safety pamphlets published at a minimal cost by the county printer. The pamphlets are then to be distributed free at schools, libraries and pool supply stores.

Just how many children can be saved from drowning thanks to a brochure isn't clear. What is clear is this: Suffolk County has already been there, done that. In 2005 the county created a Pool Safety Task Force made up of legislative representatives, officials from the County Executive's Office, the Health and Planning Departments, child safety advocates and a pool industry expert. Their recommendation? A poster contest to increase public awareness. And a pamphlet. The contest, aimed at high school students, was put into effect during the 2005-2006 school year. As summer approached, a winning entry was announced; it was one out of only four posters received by the task force, said the office of the Setauket legislator who led the effort, Vivian Viloria-Fisher.

That poster contest was "the basis of a countywide educational campaign promoting pool safety," according to a task force press release. Sadly, it didn't save the 9-year-old girl who drowned in Cutchogue that summer. And it certainly didn't help save the six children who drowned in swimming pools in Suffolk County this summer.

There's no denying that educating parents about pool safety is imperative. All swimming pools have a built-in risk factor, and even under strict adult supervision a child can drown. In one devastating case this year, a 4-year-old girl in Commack was found dead in the shallow end of her family's pool, although other people had been in the backyard at the time.

A poster campaign can't save children from backyard drownings.

This new "Be Pool Smart" poster and pamphlet campaign shouldn't be "the cornerstone" of a safety bill; it should just be one part of it. After all, a brochure is only as effective as its distribution, and the county is barely financing this effort. There ought to at least be money for postage so that residents can receive this crucial safety information in their mail.

Through partnerships with pool and spa retailers that have the advertising budgets for awareness campaigns, the county might create public service announcements for television, radio and newspapers, running year-round to reinforce the message. In addition, public pools could offer free swimming lessons to youngsters — certainly an invaluable, life-saving skill for children living on an island.

In the end, pool safety requires not only absolute parental supervision, but a whole panoply of practical precautions — pool covers, fences, alarms. Toss in an educational brochure for good measure, but pamphlets alone won't safeguard children from unspeakable disaster. Lawmakers ought to know that. □

Claudia Gryvatz Copquin is the author of the forthcoming book "The Neighborhoods of Queens."