

# It's your opinion

Friday, February 25, 1972

## Theater could aid Willowbrook

In the past several weeks, I have watched the horrible goings on at Willowbrook State School. I have an idea that may help out the children of Willowbrook.

During the war, I was not drafted because of an ear ailment, and at that time worked at Willowbrook (which was known then as Halloran Hospital), in charge of sound in the wards and the auditorium. My thought is, if this auditorium is still available, why not have the amateur theatrical groups of Staten Island put on shows every weekend? The money derived from these shows could be turned over to Willowbrook to buy the children clothes or whatever needs that they may have.

I belong to the Our Lady Queen of Peace Church, New Drop, theatrical group. We put on a show once a year for our parish. Of course, our talents, our time, and costumes, etc., are all on a voluntary basis. I am sure that our group would be more than happy to put on a show on Saturday and Sunday toward this worthy cause.

The only way that this would ever work is through your efforts and concern of publicizing this letter in your paper.

THOMAS L. NIESI,

232 Locust Ave.,  
New Dorp

SUNDAY February 27, 1972

## Where have officials been?

As a lifelong resident of Staten Island (51 years), a father of three grown children, a concerned citizen and a crucified taxpayer, I direct the following two questions at all of our local elected officials — Murphy, Marchi, Amann, Russo, etc.

So you guys finally found the location of Willowbrook. That place must be in an isolated area. But you know, some people are very good at pin-pointing locations. One that I can name is the late U.S. Senator from New York, Robert Kennedy. In 1965, seven years ago, gentlemen, he came to Staten Island during his campaign, stopped at a gas station, obtained a road map and found Willowbrook very easily. He then toured that place and soon after he denounced the conditions that existed then, on

television.

My first question is this — where the hell have you guys been for the past seven years?

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A few years ago there was a scandal involving the moneys collected from parking meters, involving millions of dollars, as being stolen.

The question: Whatever was the final outcome of that investigation? How quickly, quietly and efficiently that was brushed under the rug. How about one of you guys lifting up that rug and seeing who is under there? Some bigwigs might get burned by this, but what is more important to you? A singed thief or an overburdened taxpayer?

Go to it, men. November is coming and you can rest assured that this election all of you will be judged by what you have done and not by what you claim you will do.

J. J. McLAUGHLIN,

39 Troy St.,  
Great Kills

Wednesday, March 1, 1972

## Prevention is best course

Your coverage of the problems of Willowbrook has prompted many citizens of this community to ask, "What can I do?" There have been many sorts of answers: Send toys, volunteer time, give money, write your legislators, decentralize the institution, and so forth. But I submit that the solutions proposed are lacking, because they are just that — solutions.

To me the tragedy of Willowbrook is not that there are too few dollars, or too few attendants or too few facilities, although this is indeed a sad

situation. Remedying this situation is absolutely necessary — but not sufficient. I submit that the real tragedy of Willowbrook is that there are so many people there in the first place. People that needn't be there at all, but who are there nonetheless, as victims of preventable mental retardation.

To me there is no good reason for things like rubella, PKU, Rh incompatibility, poor nutrition, syphilis, lead poisoning, drug abuse, or identifiable genetic defects such as Mongolism to damage so many lives. With proper preventative measures, including genetic counseling, prenatal and postnatal care, access to medical services and early diagnosis and treatment, the undesirable effects of such factors can be greatly reduced if not eliminated.

Yet too few people are concerned with prevention. The typical "crisis mentality" that has contributed to the deterioration of our society once again clouds our vision and limits our perspectives.

I would like to give you something to think about. Members of one in 10 families suffer from birth defects, many of which result in mental retardation. At the same time,