

## First Lie

To The Editor:

When I decided to run for the position of Town Supervisor for the Town of Colton, I assured Bill Swafford that I would keep the campaign clean and he indicated that he agreed. After hearing the lies that were told to some of the voters either by my opposition or those who were working to support his campaign, I feel I have no alternative but to expose those lies individually in a series of articles.

The first lie I will address is the issue of secret meetings. The only times I can recall anything which might be described as "secret meetings" were as follows. As we left the room upon the conclusion of the negotiation meeting with DPW team, we observed former supervisor Ford in his office. I and another member of the Town Council stopped to inquire as to the condition of a family member who was critically ill and briefly outlined the progress made at that negotiation meeting. It would have been ludicrous to think we would have had an illegal meeting there, when two public works employees were in the office across the hall finalizing their negotiation meeting with the Teamsters representatives. The only other time was when former supervisor Ford personally delivered copies of his resignation letter to each town council member. Both Joan Kilroy and myself went to Bill Swafford's house to assure him as deputy that he had our support and the three of us worked to prepare a statement as a press release.

There have been many times when all members of the town council have received phone calls to discuss issues. That is what Deputy Swafford calls "keeping us all in the loop" and he continues to do that. There are decisions being made almost daily at the town hall with only Deputy Swafford and MaryJane Watson present. This is attested to by the number of resolutions which were all prepared prior to the last meeting and read for approval at that time. Any discussions between myself and either the former supervisor or Board Member Kilroy are no more illegal or "secret" than what is taking place at 94 Main Street, Colton.

I believe the only way small towns can conduct business is to be able to discuss issues openly among the board members and consider all their views prior to making a final decision. Sometimes it is necessary to discuss some issues one-to-one over the phone or face to face, but that is not illegal and does not constitute a secret meeting.

According to the lies being told by that group, supposedly secret plans were also being made on the trip to Albany for a meeting between all board members and assessors and representatives from the Governor's office and ORPS (the Office of Real Property). In fact, we had planned to all ride together in a seven or eight passenger van, but the former assessor chair refused to make the trip in the same vehicle as a member of his assessor team. Therefore, MaryJane Watson decided

who would ride in her vehicle and the rest of us rode with the former supervisor. Following the meeting, we were to travel a short distance and have dinner together so we could discuss and digest the information presented to us. Councilperson MaryJane Watson, Deputy Supervisor Bill Swafford and the former Assessor Chairperson did not follow our car but instead went elsewhere for dinner; therefore, we never had our wrap-up meeting. One wonders who was making secret plans.

Grace Hawley  
Town Board Member and  
Candidate for Supervisor  
Colton