

## ***It's Relative***

To The Editor:

Due to the false information which was given to voters during the Republican Primary Election by either my opponent or his supporters, I am responding in the second of a series of letters. This lie pertains to the fact that it would not be possible for me to serve as Supervisor while a relative serves as Highway Superintendent and that it would not be possible for me to vote on any issue connected to the highway department. That is false.

I discussed this situation with the town attorney and the attorneys for the Association of Towns and was assured that the only items I would not be able to vote upon were those related to wages and benefits specific to the position of highway superintendent. For the past six years, that has been the practice. The attorneys explained that the board would simply need to pass a resolution to take the highway department budget out of the regular budget and let the remaining members discuss and vote on those two specific issues. Once the issue of salary and benefits were determined, the board would then vote to return the highway department budget back to the full board and I could then vote in support of the final budget with no problem.

Basic to town operations and town law, the Highway Department is separate from the rest of the town operations and the Highway Superintendent controls his department autonomously. The only controls the town board and supervisor have on that department are in approval of the budget and approval of purchases over \$1,500.

As an elected official, the Highway Superintendent does not answer to the town board or the supervisor, but to the voting public. They are the only ones who can determine whether he is doing the job he was elected to do. As Supervisor, I would have no more control over that position than I presently do as a Town Board member.

There are other local towns where members of an immediate family serve in elected roles: Town of Brasher, Clare, Pitcairn and Depeyster. Because of small population base in many North Country towns, often it is not possible to obtain qualified and interested residents who feel they have the time and energy to devote to public service without getting the involvement of some who may be related. As long as relatives are not serving in the same capacity or on the same committee or board, there should not be any conflict or problem.

I ask that you seriously consider this information before voting on Nov. 6.

Grace Hawley  
Colton