

In Review

To the Editor:

Last March I wrote a letter to the editor concerning the political state of affairs in Colton. As I stated then I'm not a resident, nor do I own property in the Town of Colton; but my Mother was born there, I have numerous relations there, and am quite happy to consider some of those embroiled in the current political struggle good friends.

These folks sure have made reading the local paper interesting the past few months. Colton's native son and resident "teller of tall tales" Ham Ferry would cringe at the current competition. Were Jim Henson alive and in the area, his creative genius would run overtime.

Before going into exile Heinrich may have tried to educate the anticipated successors in the ways of local politics, but they appear slow learners. What one gleans from articles printed in the *Courier Observer*, and letters written by those mentioned is as follows:

Colton Democrats Caucus - Town Democrat Chair Dan McNamara announces a unified slate - Kilroy, Zelinski, and Hayes. Shortly after nominations McNamara is ousted and replaced as Town Chair by Joan Kilroy, and Zelinski and Hayes appear to separate from Ms. Kilroy even as Zelinski is quoted as saying they are "running as a team". Kilroy decides to remove herself from nomination due to job time constraints (Note Kilroy was challenged in the primary and, had five votes gone for her opponent, Colton would have had a viable Democratic Candidate). The only published letter of support from the new Chair of the Town Democratic Party is for Conservative candidate Grace Hawley.

Bill Swafford wins the Republican Caucus over Grace Hawley 182 to 75. In spite of the landslide there is no active campaign support from the Republican Town Committee, made up of Ronnie Roberts (relative of Grace Hawley), Nancy Shea (relative of Ron Roberts), Grace Hawley (Conservative candidate opposing Republican Swafford), and Mary Thomas (letter to the editor from Glenn Thomas [husband] supporting Grace Hawley). Swafford appears to be savvy enough to stay above the fray and above slinging political dirt.

Grace Hawley wins the nod of the Conservative party chaired by her mentor Hank Ford (Note: there are 25 registered Conservatives in the Town of Colton). She publishes the fact that she doesn't care much for open government. She makes political fodder out of an unsigned sympathy card that could have carried a double meaning, when it would have been easy and effective to simply ignore it, and then makes the statement "this is a sick bunch of people we are dealing with up here". She states in an interview that she is unaware of any meetings in violation of the open meetings law and then in the same interview describes one held in Albany that she was present for. Ms. Hawley, indicating that she is responding to "lies which were being spread during the recent Republican primary" announces a series of letters to respond. Anarchy on behalf of the Town residents appears to be the prevailing topic. It's interesting that in addition to the support of Ms. Kilroy of the Democratic Party, published support also comes from Ms. Sally Murray (who shares a home with Ms. Kilroy) who rants about "A small group of dissenters in the

Town who have worked very hard these past few years to destroy certain individuals and certain ideas. It borders on a cult like frenzy"; and Connie Ford Hatch (Hank Ford's sister) who applauds Ms. Murray's letter and states that "Our Republican party (she supports the Conservative candidate) seems to be suffering because of the loud minority". Didn't Bill Swafford get 182 votes?

Last Saturday Dan McNamara felt the need to weigh in starting his letter on full value assessments "There is a small group of individuals who attend the town of Colton board meetings and generally expound on subjects which are of concern to those who live in the town of Colton. Many times they have no factual basis for what they say, on petitions they pass.....". This from the man who overnight (supposedly without any benefit of prior meetings held in violation of the public meetings law) became head assessor and Code enforcement officer, garnered a considerable salary and has never been able to explain how it came to pass.

Also in last Saturday's *Courier Observer* is a front page story about Colton Town Justice Denny Bulger resigning. The issue is over increasing his salary \$2,350.00 (30 percent). It's interesting that the article states "Bulger could not be reached for comment but a copy of his resignation letter was provided by Town Council members Grace Hawley and Joan Kilroy". Also of interest is that Bulger does not give any date for resignation only "you are placed on notice that it is my intent to resign prior to the completion of my term in office". The term doesn't expire for several years, so that sure gives him some negotiation leeway. The letter concludes "Personality

differences have no place in sound management decisions" Strange an elected official, one that solicits votes for an office that he supposedly understands the duties of and is aware of the salary constraints, feels insulted when increased salary demands are not met. Why take the job if you don't like the terms, and why bring up personalities when candidates for office run your messages to the press.

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