

# readers respond:

E-MAIL US: EDITORIAL@THEHUDSONVALLEYNEWS.COM

## TO THE EDITOR:

I would like to address the lack of a track at FDR High School. I am a runner on the Hyde Park Central School District track team, and it is impossible for us to have any home meets because the track we have is not acceptable to the New York State Public High School Athletic Association. The track is cinder, and certified tracks are made of a synthetic material.

I feel if we are going to have a track team, we should also have a home track. We have a soccer field, a baseball diamond and a football field. Why shouldn't we have a track that can host meets?

I have heard the new superintendent, Dr. Greer Fischer, is interested in a new track for the high school, and I would like to encourage her to pursue it.

**Christopher Granados-Kramer**  
Hyde Park

## TO THE EDITOR:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and administration of Hospice Foundation, Inc., as well as the patients and families served by Hospice, Inc. in Dutchess and Ulster counties, I want to thank everyone who participated in this year's Hospice Tree of Life at the Poughkeepsie Galleria Mall and the Hudson Valley Mall in Kingston. I would also like to give special thanks to the 70 volunteers who spent hundreds of hours staffing the tables at the malls, greeting donors and assisting them with the placement of their memorial ornaments. In special recognition, I would like to thank Sue Tansey from the Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union, who coordinated her volunteers to help fill in time gaps in the mall schedules. She and her coworkers were tremendously supportive and generous in assisting in our efforts. Without their help and all of the volunteers, we would not have been able to raise more than \$22,000 this year. Thank you, again, for your wonderful support and for helping Hospice fulfill its mission to provide quality, compassionate care to those among us who are facing truly difficult times.

**Michael Murphy**  
Executive Director  
Hospice Foundation, Inc.

## TO THE EDITOR:

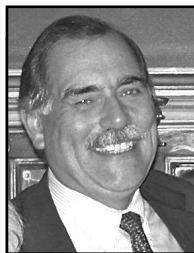
The Hyde Park Town Board ran on the slogan "People Not Politics." Many Hyde Parkers hoped this meant the new team would put the welfare of residents before their own personal issues. However, Supervisor Tom Martino and the town board have demonstrated, once again, that what they really meant was to silence all who dare to disagree.

Several highly regarded volunteers, including Emily Svenson, Lou Lleyveld and Herb Sweet, with over 24 years of combined service on the Conservation Advisory Council and the Zoning Board of Appeals, were not reappointed to the positions they applied for. In the case of the Conservation Advisory Council, the failure to reappoint nullifies its ability to function. With the Zoning Board of Appeals, Hyde Park lost a member whose knowledge of the code is derived from 18 years of study and training.

These valuable volunteers work free, providing information and advice to the town's planning and town boards on important land-use decisions. As most towns struggle to make ends meet, we ask elected officials utilize the resources at hand and govern with logic. Refrain from making decisions based on the rhetoric of a few. Instead, keep the interest of the majority at the center of your decisions.

Emily Svenson and Lou Lleyveld should be reappointed to the CAC, where five positions are open, and at the next opportunity, Herb Sweet should be reappointed to the ZBA. This would be "People Not Politics."

**Aileen Rohr**  
Hyde Park



GUEST COLUMN

## In local races, does party matter?

BY BOB LINVILLE

I've been out of public office (voluntarily) for a year now and, in addition to enjoying more travel and time with family, I've had time to reflect on some of the lessons I learned in the six years I spent running for and serving as a Hyde Park town councilman. I'd like to share some conclusions with our current elected officials, as well as residents, because I think they can serve as good perspective "checks" for all Hyde Parkers. Put simply, I learned that I had been right about some things and wrong about others.

One of the things I believed before even embarking on my first door-to-door campaign was we are all a great deal more alike than we are different. I was right about that. Democrats, Republicans, Conservatives, Independents, whatever – we share many of the same desires: to live in safe neighborhoods, to receive good community services at a reasonable cost, to send our kids to good schools, to have decent job opportunities for ourselves and our children and to be respected by those elected to represent us.

Another belief I had at the outset: In a small town like Hyde Park, political party affiliation shouldn't matter. After all, most people I spoke with told me they vote for the "best person," not the party. I was wrong about the first sentence but right about the second. That may seem a contradiction. It is not.

Does party affiliation matter? I am a Democrat, and I ran as a Democrat. That's because the people who encouraged me to run believe in the same things I do:

- It's more important to help your neighbors than to make sure you have more than they do;
- If we find common ground and work together, our community can thrive;
- Good things take patience, hard work, some time and some luck;

• Election campaigns should be about issues, honesty and full disclosure, not about scare tactics and dirty tricks.

If you find those things in your candidate, Democrat or otherwise, vote for that person – he or she is probably the "best." But, bottom line: to vote for the best candidate, voters must have enough information about that person. For first-time candidates, this means giving the voters many opportunities to meet you, to hear your thoughts and to judge your character. For incumbents, it means using the public forum you're given to listen to your constituents' views, openly discuss the issues and their alternatives, and make it clear why you are voting the way you are. The days of trusting elected officials left alone to do what's best are long gone, if they ever existed.

However, how many citizens have the time to really familiarize themselves with candidates, particularly in local races? Between job demands, parenting responsibilities and juggling a host of other activities, probably not that many. Parties can play an important role in getting information out and helping voters identify candidates' priorities. Despite the negativity surrounding party politics these days, I'm still proud to be a Democrat because of the values and beliefs we share about promoting the common good.

Pundits say in an election, "going negative," or playing on fear and repeating angry sound bites, works. That's correct when the electorate doesn't feel a valued part of the process. If they don't know the candidate, if they don't have a sense that their opinion is valued, they will rise to the call for anger and vote only to "throw the bums out." But that is not a process that ensures choosing the best person.

Nearly all the people I've known and served with in Hyde Park are more than capable of civil and reasoned decision making. The hard-working, decent people who live, work and volunteer in our town should expect and deserve the same from those who represent them.

*Bob Linville, a Staatsburg resident, represented Ward 1 on the Hyde Park Town Board from 2004-09. Respond to this column at editorial@thehudsonvalleynews.com.*

## Express Yourself.

The *Hudson Valley News* isn't interested in a one-way dialogue, nor do we think we've cornered the market on opinion and good ideas. That's where we hope you come in. If you have a reaction to one of our stories or one of our columnists, let us know. Your opinion counts with us. Don't confine your pontificating to the dinner table or the water cooler, share your thoughts with the rest of us. It's easy. Write us at editorial@thehudsonvalleynews.com.