

Service with a smile

BY MELISSA MILLIGAN

When you walk into Hyde Park Town Hall, you should expect elected officials to be ready and willing to help you, and have confidence that they will do so as quickly as they can. I am running for receiver of taxes to create an office that is friendly and welcoming for everyone, while providing efficient and dependable service.

During my five years as deputy town clerk, I gained a thorough understanding of the workings of town hall. I always enjoyed working with the public and am eager to be back serving the people of Hyde Park.

One immediate change I would like to institute is reinstating an open-door policy in the receiver of taxes office. I appreciated former Receiver of Taxes Nancy Sheehan's decision to welcome residents to have a seat and talk with her directly. Simply having a space to sit, say "hello" and write out a check shows people their public servants are putting citizens' needs first. Though the receiver never sets tax rates (whew!), it's important someone with a sympathetic ear be there when a resident has questions or concerns about their bill.

For those who don't know me, I am a Hyde Park native. I earned my associates degree in accounting from Dutchess Community College. I have lived in my current home over 10 years, and my son attends North Park Elementary School, where I volunteer on the PTA.

I'm also the office manager for my husband's business, Milligan Landscaping, and am responsible for all the bills and bookkeeping for this active company. Obviously, this requires strong computer skills, and I am confident I also have the energy and attention to detail to easily and capably take on the responsibilities of receiver. I am conscientious about meeting deadlines and diligent about checking my work to avoid errors. Residents

can rest assured their tax payments will be recorded accurately and efficiently under my watch.

As an office manager, I am also the first contact when customers arrive, and I take pride in the service I provide. I try to always find a way to say "yes," whether that's assuring the customer we can do the job, helping them find the person who can or informing them about other options available. This same attitude will apply with the receiver position. When people enter town hall, many will poke their head into the receiver's office first. If I am not the person they need, I will help them find the right person or otherwise provide my assistance in meeting their needs.

When I worked in the clerk's office, I enjoyed being part of a cooperative team in town hall. For example, when someone in one of the other offices had a computer problem, I was happy to help them figure it out. This type of cooperation creates a positive atmosphere for employees and the public, as well as saving taxpayers money through efficiency.

I am proud to be running with Team Hyde Park because I respect their earnest desire to serve the town. Receiver of taxes is not a "political" position, but having worked at town hall, I know when the town board changes, the mood there changes as well. I believe Team Hyde Park's focus on restoring respect for residents, opening lines of communication, and running a fiscally sound town government will bring back a positive and cooperative spirit for everyone working in town hall.

If you would like to be welcomed and feel respected when you come to the receiver of taxes office, please vote for me this November. It would be my privilege to serve my neighbors in town hall once again.

Melissa Milligan is running for receiver of taxes in Hyde Park and has been endorsed by the Hyde Park Democratic Committee. The committee welcomes feedback at hydeparkdems@gmail.com. Respond to this column at editorial@thehudsonvalleynews.com.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“There's no better way to see D.C. than on the back of a Harley.”

– Sarah Palin while touring the nation's capitol Saturday.