

Professionalism – a matter of character not education

To the editor:

Oct. 5 column highlights an important point, all people must be respected. I have spoken out on this issue - and am often asked how I remain focused and respectful even when treated disrespectfully by town leadership. I do not take misguided or bad behavior personally. I don't let it interfere with the work I was elected to do.

Education or credentials, although useful, are certainly not a measure of a person's worth. The Spafford Party's call for professionalism is not meant to indicate a strong bias towards formal education or a degree. Professionalism refers to high standards in any type of work — or a serious person who strives to work with great skill.

Professionalism in dealing with others implies a commitment to act with respect, integrity and honesty — to follow proper process, to educate or train oneself to do the best job possible. In this sense professionalism has nothing to do with economic status, paper credentials or how long someone has lived in a place.

Spafford Party candidates and active supporters take town government very seriously, attend meetings, study issues, ask questions and freely offer their services to the community. I agree with their position that professionalism is of utmost importance in government.

In the two years since I have been elected to town office, I have witnessed unprofessional behavior: profanity, threats, intimidation, verbal abuse, gender discrimination, abuse of power, disrespect for the law.... It is an entrenched way of doing business and can only be changed in the election booth.

As an example, this week the NYS Attorney General intervened to correct unlawful behavior by Spafford town government. That behavior was defiant and unprofessional. It circumvented protections mandated by NYS and it jeopardized our town, opening it up to lawsuits and serious expense.

The October public meeting and minutes must address this as a matter of public record. Those who attended the August 30th board meeting know I did as much as one board member standing alone could, to prevent a bad situation for our town.

NYS officials such as Roy Scott, who struggles to have

Safety Code Enforcement, indicate that while the State redirects specific behavior harmful to the public, it is up to the voters, not the State, to change Spafford's government.

When the Spafford Party calls for professionalism, they are alerting the public to problems without using personal negative attacks. They are blaming no one, but highlighting the need to move forward in a positive way. On November 8, we must elect town officials who are not invested in perpetuating business as usual. It must be a clean sweep.

When the Spafford Party candidates take their seats on the town board, they'll work hard to hold themselves and town government to high professional standards. With a professional team, I will focus on bringing the community together over important issues — our utmost priority will be fair, open and thoughtful government, responsive to the people.

JOYCE BARNETT
COUNCILMEMBER
CANDIDATE, TOWN
SUPERVISOR