

letters

to the Editor

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Dorm decision driven by tax base

It is quite difficult to watch our elected officials place money above the safety and concerns of our community. Indeed, that occurred in the Town of Amherst recently when (various boards) voted to approve the development of a student dormitory on Chestnut Ridge Road.

Despite a multitude of protests from residents of Chestnut Ridge Road and the Willow Ridge Civic Association the town somehow could not turn its back to the lure of increasing its tax base. The project is fi-

nanced by a Texas-based organization that already has a dormitory structure on Sweet Home Road.

How this community will survive with 550 more students utilizing Chestnut Ridge Road exclusively was completely overlooked by our elected officials. This is not to mention the increase in crime that has been experienced with this organization's Sweet Home dormitory complex during the past year.

This project was about increasing Amherst's tax base and not about the concerns of its residents. It is sad to say but this is most likely the beginning of a
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House Republicans don't understand impact on voters

Perhaps the most astonishing thing surrounding the ongoing Tom Reynolds self-immolation — even beyond the lead that successful private business entrepreneur Jack Davis has now managed to build in their race for a seat in the House of Representatives — was his absence from ABC's "This Week" program last Sunday morning.

The appearance had been scheduled, by the way, for weeks. In other words, it was not simply a last-second invitation to participate in a last-second "gotcha" session in regard to the Mark Foley meltdown.

For Reynolds to miss a shot to swashbuckle from Secaucus to Seattle, he must have been recovering no doubt from the tainted crow he's been repeatedly forced to choke down. He certainly didn't become suddenly sick because his slice of humble pie had been supersized.

Maybe he cancelled because he couldn't surround himself with a bunch of prepubescent props, like he did during his most disgraceful press performance of this entire episode. Or maybe it's because that for every knee-jerk political action that Reynolds or his other cronies attempt to stage — it's two weeks now and Republicans are no closer to getting their stories on the same page as they were when the Friday afternoon "ABC News," and not Mark Foley's colleagues, brought this to the public's attention — there is always, always a more plausible, nonpartisan and believable reaction.

Or maybe it's because after almost two weeks of trying, he figured out that there's no way to answer the unanswerable, no matter if you can spend \$200,000 on television commercials.

In fact, what's shocking is that Republicans still haven't figured out that the usual tried and true techniques of brushing aside scandalous behavior — on which the GOP has no franchise, by the way, despite the Democratic euphoria floating through the crisp fall air — fits this case about as well as ballerina tights on Denny Hastert. Or that it is a story with more tentacles than a mutant octopus, a kind of Chinese water torture which will drip, drip, drip all the way to Election Day, no matter how many reams of the quicker picker upper Reynolds rolls out.

What the GOP simply is too obtuse or out of touch to understand is just how deeply and closely this whole implosion strikes average voters, no matter their gender, no matter their party affiliation, no matter if they are parents or not. Reynolds and his colleagues walked through the poison ivy patch and instead of reaching for the Calamine lotion, they continue to scratch like crazy.



BRIAN ACKLEY

Political Columnist

Not only is it a story to which we can all easily relate, it comes at a time when total strangers are popping up at school buildings to terrorize teenagers, reinforcing the whole notion that people who have the power can't do enough when it comes to protecting youngsters from potential predators. Voters will tolerate politics as usual to a point — in fact, we're an electorate

far too forgiving for the way our public trust is so constantly violated — but the people correctly and quickly perceived this as the Boardwalk, not Baltic Avenue, of buck passing.

Supporters have been reduced to the tired argument of how somehow we need Tom to stay in office just to make sure he can keep serving up the biggest possible slice of ham off the patronage pig. Hogwash. Reynolds should get some credit for helping save the Niagara Falls Air Force Base. But how's Brian Higgins doing as a national neophyte?

Pretty well, thanks. His performance as a D.C. freshman puts a pin in all the Porky Pig pontification.

And, if the GOP loses control of the house, which is looking more and more likely, Reynolds' carving knife will suddenly become duller than six-year-old scissors.

Adam Putnam did his best Reynolds imitation Sunday morning, sitting in on ABC as a sacrificial substitute. "The dirty laundry is gone," he told the network. We can only wish.

(Brian Ackley is a columnist for the Weekly Independent Newspapers of Western New York. For more information on WIN, or to provide feedback on this column, visit our Web site at www.wnynewspapers.com. Opinions expressed here are those of the author.)

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Last week's question:

Who will you vote for in the 26th Congressional District election?

You said:

A - Tom Reynolds 42%
B - Jack Davis 51%
C - Not Sure 7%

How to reach The Bee

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Take advantage of your right to vote

Vote early and often. That old saying often heard around Election Day is meant as a funny throwback to the days of rampant vote fraud and ballot-box stuffing. Although said in jest, there's nothing funny about denying someone the right to vote.

And yet 32 million potential voters failed to register in 2004, denying themselves that very right because they never took the time to exercise this most basic of American rights. In addition, according to the Census Bureau, 19 million registered voters failed to cast their ballots in 2000; 10 percent of them said business kept them from voting.

Think about that: Nearly 2 million people who could have supported business-friendly candidates stayed at work and let others decide who would represent them in public office.

Of course, every small-business owner is busy managing employees, handling the paperwork and making sure customers are happy. But most still vote: According to a 2005 NFIB National Small-Business Poll, 95 percent of small-business owners are registered to vote, and 84 percent usually do vote. That's a good start. Now it's time to think about encouraging employees, family members, customers and vendors to vote.

Vote early — As a small-business owner, you can make sure you vote regardless of what crisis might arise on Election Day. If you're already registered, you can go to www.NFIB.com/politics for information about ways to vote before Election Day. Voters can either complete an absentee ballot and send it in by mail or, in some states, vote early in person at designated locations.

Vote often — figuratively speaking, of course. NFIB surveys have shown that 96 percent of small-business owners believe that every citizen should participate in the political process. And they can multiply the power of that vote by urging employees, family members, customers and vendors to support candidates and issues that will improve the regulatory and economic environment for small business.



TODD STOTTELMYER

NFIB President and CEO

Every small-business owner should take the time to talk to employees about the impact of higher taxes and burdensome regulation. Let them know that every extra bit of paperwork the government forces upon the company has a potential negative impact on their paychecks and level of benefits. Tell your family how the impact of government at every level doesn't end at your small business, but comes right in the front door at home and affects

them, too.

Thank your customers for their business and urge them to help you reduce the costs of their purchases by voting to ease the burden of excessive government regulation. For more help, visit www.NFIB.com/politics where you'll find a variety of materials, talking points and even a new video to help you discuss these relevant issues with others.

And there's still time before Election Day to support pro-small-business candidates with a financial contribution, use of your facilities for a campaign event, or by volunteering to help get out the vote. Remember, Election Day is not the first day to vote; it is the last.

Todd Stottlemeyer is president and CEO of the National Federation of Independent Business.