

Spoth makes last-minute decision to remove herself from endorsement consideration for the 15th District

by JESSICA L. FINCH
Associate Editor

After announcing she would seek the Republican endorsement for the Erie County Legislature's 15th District, Francina Spoth withdrew her name late Thursday — just days prior to Saturday's vote.

A unanimous vote was made on Saturday to endorse Edward Rath III, the remaining candidate. The seat is currently held by Dr. Barry Weinstein, who will not be seeking re-election.

Accusations had been made by Spoth that pressure was put on members of the Amherst Republican Committee, and therefore

she decided to run as an independent Republican in a primary set for Sept. 11.

"I am still running, just as an independent Republican," she said.

In response to the accusation, Erie County Republican Chairman James Domagalski said a fair decision was made to support Rath.

"I wish (Spoth) would have competed for it," he said of the endorsement. "There was no pressure put on anybody during this race. The committee men and women decided — I think on a good candidate."

Domagalski said the Republican agenda to reform govern-

ment, reduce taxes and rebuild the economy should be supported by the party members — including Spoth.

"If she is behind the agenda she should step behind the person that won. I hope a primary doesn't happen," he said.

He added that it was an open process, and he was disappointed that Spoth did not show up.

Endorsed candidate Rath said he was surprised when Spoth did not attend Saturday's meeting.

"I thought it was a fair and balanced process. I wasn't sure where she was coming from," he said about the accusations of pressure on committee members to vote a certain way.

However, he said he was excited and inspired by the endorsement

and is looking forward to working hard during the campaign — and to success and victories in the fall.

"I am a firm believer in Repub-

lican principles that govern the Amherst Republican Committee and what it represents," he said.

He said the the push for a primary in September won't change his agenda or message.

"I'm looking forward to representing the Amherst Republican Committee and the principles it believes in," he said. "Most importantly my campaign will be about lessening the tax burden on residents in Erie County, restructuring government and provide county services efficiently."

Both candidates said they will seek the endorsement of the Conservative and Independence parties, expected to be announced later in the spring.

“I am still running, just as an independent Republican.”

— Francina Spoth



FINDING A TARGET — Sacred Heart Academy junior Monique Mattes prepares to fire back during the dodgeball tournament held at the school on Friday. Students Elizabeth Tramosch and KelliAnne Connelly chaired the event which had raised \$1,000 in sponsors from businesses for Catholic Charities and the Nuns in Africa — Sisters of St. Francis International Mission in Tanzania, East Africa.

Photo by Jim Smerecak
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Plant 16 undergoes replacement projects

by JESSICA L. FINCH
Associate Editor

Big plans are under way for the Amherst Engineering Department as several parts within one of the water treatment plants have reached their expiration dates.

Town Engineer Jeff Burroughs, one year into his appointment to the position, said several replacements will be taking place at Plant 16 during the next two years — the largest being an estimated \$4-5 million project, which will replace a 27-year-old filtering system.

Required by the state Department of Environmental Conservation, the four filters are the final step before the waste water is released into Tonawanda Creek. Burroughs said that because of the creek's slow flow rate the extra filtering process is necessary. Other treatment plants, based on their dumping location, do not have the requirement.

"The filters are not functioning ... there are holes in the filter," he said, adding that during the past five years, there have "bumps in the road" but now the parts need to be replaced.

During a recent Town Board meeting it was estimated the filters were working at a capacity of 12 percent, but Burroughs said that despite that, the water into Tonawanda Creek passed all requirements.

"We want the waste water to be extremely clean," he said. "This plant meets permit regulations without the filters. They provide a backstop for the plant, like when there is high water flow."

As of last week, the department had received responses from the request for qualifications and would be selecting a firm to design the new filtering system. The bid award could be announced at the April 2 Town Board meeting, with installation completion by spring or summer 2008.

Reviewing the options for the replacement of the filters, Burroughs said some estimates were in the \$8 million range but the selected process cut that price in half.

"This a new technology for waste water ... it's the same that has been used for drinking water," Burroughs said about the filters that will be installed.

It is one of the largest projects for the department and will allow for a larger capacity of water to be filtered.

A \$1.6 million bond has also been approved by the Town Board for a four-part project, also at Plant 16.

Burroughs said some of the equipment is original, approximately 30 years of age.

"It is a testament to the good design when the plant was built," he said, adding that after 30-plus years, the parts have reached the end of their service life.

Included in that project is a grit collector replacement — built from stainless steel; transformer replacements; and safety measures that will be put in places around the high voltage areas.

The town is working to meet new regulations that were passed in 2005 to create a safe work environment, Burroughs said.

Grandson could face 25 years to life for murder

Richard B. D'Andrea, 21, has been arraigned for the murder of his grandmother, Erie County District Attorney Frank J. Clark said.

D'Andrea was arraigned on

March 16 on an indictment charging him with second-degree murder.

He is accused of the Jan. 28 beating death of his grandmother at her residence on Kaymar

Drive, Amherst.

If convicted of the crime, D'Andrea faces a prison sentence of 25 years to life. He pleaded not guilty at arraignment and remains jailed with no bail.

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