

## letters

# to the Editor



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## Totes not enough to rid town of rats

I read with interest the article "Rodents now face totes in town, village" in the May 2 Amherst Bee. I think we need

more than totes to eliminate the rat population.

Recently I encountered one of the "beasts" while driving down our street. I considered hitting it with the car but was concerned (based on the size of this rat) (Please turn to page 10)



### Correction

Margaux Gill, not Angela Sobatka as reported in last week's Bee, scored the U12 Revolution soccer team's second goal in a 3-1 win over the U-13 Akron on Tuesday, May 8.



### Clarification

In the May 16 edition, the article "Assessor's office procedure examined," Ron Nowak used a house on Forestview as an example of unfair assessment. The article should have explained he compared the ranch-style house to similar houses in the town.

EXCLUSIVE

## Beepoll

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Click to vote on this Bee Poll TODAY!

Did you vote in a school district election last week?

ONLINE POLL RESULTS  
VOTE

Log onto  
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for next week's online poll!

Last week's question:

**Have you ever challenged your home assessment?**

You said:

**55% YES 45% NO**

## How to reach The Bee

The Amherst Bee publishes community news free of charge. Mail items to The Amherst Bee, P.O. Box 150, Buffalo, NY, 14231-0150. Our telephone number is 632-4700. Our fax number is 633-8601. Our Web sites are www.BeeNews.com and www.AmherstBee.com. Amherst Managing Editor David Sherman's e-mail address is dsherman@BeeNews.com. Amherst Associate Editor Jessica Finch's e-mail address is jfinch@BeeNews.com. Senders should state on their contributions whether their e-mail address can be published.

Letters to the editor must be typed, double-spaced and are limited to a maximum of 300 words. Names will not be withheld unless the author demonstrates a clear reason for anonymity. No unsigned letters will be printed. You must supply your name, address and telephone number for verification. Authors are limited to one letter every four weeks. Letters are subject to editing.

Our deadline is 5 p.m. on the Friday prior to publication. For engagement and wedding announcements, The Bee offers a form to list names and details. Call for a copy. There is no charge to publish engagements, weddings or anniversaries.

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# Collins hits the ground running in race for county executive

Chris Collins says it's time to draw a line in the sand. And the Republican candidate for Erie County executive isn't talking about using his toe to mark his territory on a beach somewhere down in Florida.

In fact, chances are Collins won't have much time over the next five months to take any type of vacation out of state since his campaign to become the county's top elected official is now in full swing.

Touting what he calls a "bold and historic" campaign for reform, Collins is making it clear his concept of using a business-like approach towards running government is the best way to introduce more economic opportunities to our region.

"My campaign isn't just about me running for office," Collins said last week over a cup of coffee. "It's about the future, and it's about helping to get away from the ongoing bickering amongst our political leaders that led to the dark times we've recently experienced."

A long-time resident of Clarence, Collins says his 35 years of experience as a businessman helps make up the basis of a perfect resume that he plans to present to the general public as they prepare to head to the polls in November.

Collins helps turn around businesses that are on their last legs or have already gone bankrupt. A few years ago he cleaned up Buffalo China. Just last year he built a factory in North Tonawanda for two other of his turnaround companies. All told, Collins claims he's saved or helped to create over 600 jobs here in Western New York.

And now the 57-year-old wants to do the same thing for Erie County by using his expertise to fix a system that he says is fatally flawed.

"Erie County is broken, and I believe the taxpayers need a business-like approach to fix these problems," said Collins. "What we need to do is go back to the basics, which is why I'm calling for a county government that focuses on what I'm calling the three R's of reform. We need to reform, rebuild our economy, and reduce taxes."

Collins, whose only previous political experience was an unsuccessful congressional race against John LaFalce in 1998, says he openly admits and actually proudly proclaims that he's not a seasoned politician.

"I'm not a career politician, but what I am is a manager and a leader," he said. "I know people will try and tag me as just another Republican but my response to that is that it's politicians from both parties who created this situation. We can do politics as usual or we can take a business-like approach and lead by example."

Collins said critics who say he is simply a businessman and entrepreneur who won't be able to convert into an effective elected official need look no further than downstate to see that a "non-politician" can be a true leader.

"Take a look at Mike Bloomberg and the job he's done as mayor of New York City," said Collins. "He showed it can be done and it will be done here if the taxpayers believe in my message."

Collins said his tracking of actions taken by current County Executive Joel Giambra and the County Legislature show no sincere efforts towards true reform.

"We need to go back to focusing on the taxpayer," said Collins. "Every time someone in power goes to make a decision they need to ask if it's in the best interests long-term for the taxpayer or is it just a short-term Band-Aid that may or may not involve some people siding with certain special interests?"

Collins said other plans he would implement if elected would be to "eliminate the smoke and mirrors," stressing that transparency is needed.

"I want the budget to be posted on the county's Web site in an easy-to-read format," said Collins. "The patronage will stop."

Collins said the feedback he's gotten from residents and business owners he's met thus far on the campaign trail has been "100 percent positive." That, coupled with the recent decision by Amherst's Bill O'Loughlin to back out of the county executive race as a potential GOP candidate, has cleared the way for Collins to solely focus on the Nov. 6 election while Democratic hopefuls Jim Keane and Paul Clark pound away at each other as they inch closer to an eventual primary.

"If we want to solve our problems, we need a chief executive, not a chief politician," said Collins.

(Opinions are those of the author.)



DAN MEYER

Political Columnist

## Town Board fighting must stop; others should run for seats

Every society deserves an honest government that uses the public money with maximum efficiency and that keeps the interests of the voters above the interest of its members.

A good government is one that provides all essential public services, maintains law and order, works toward balanced physical development that provides its residents the quality of life they desire, creates an environment that attracts the businesses and intellectuals to enrich the society, and runs its affairs with the highest integrity and is so perceived by the citizens. And, all of the above is achieved with maximum efficiency.

It is unfortunate that this is not happening in Amherst. The Town Board members don't trust each other and are continually fighting over petty matters that have nothing to do with the people's agenda. Some of them are convinced that spending more money will provide better services.

My fellow Amherstonians, all of this must end. You deserve an honest government that serves you diligently and selflessly.

To effectuate this, the people should come forward and run for the three Town Board seats that will be voted in the November 2007 elections.

After my last appeal, I have met only one resident who has shown interest in running. The town needs you; the future of our children is at stake. I can speak from my experience; it is hard and it can be frustrating, but it is a sacrifice worthy of your highest consideration.

The town needs members of the governing

body, the Town Board, who can understand the functioning of the various town departments, who would keep the good of the people ahead of their own and who would be 100 percent honest and so perceived by the voters.

Sen. Ted Kennedy commented last week that "Politics is the art of the possible." This definition, if followed by politicians, can gradually lower the standards of efficiency and integrity. "Possible" has no lower limit. We must do better.

Campaign finance is the one evil that is hurting our democracy. The candidates need money to mail letters, to advertise in newspapers, radio and on TV, and for fliers and lawn signs. Several heavy campaign financing individuals and groups can later influence the vote of the recipient, and that can very unevenly skew the government policies, mostly against the people.

Since election campaigning needs finances, a prudent way would be to tax every household for election funding an amount from \$1 to \$10, depending on the assessed value of their homes and provide public money to eligible candidates.

The media, including newspapers, radio and TV, should pledge to provide equal time and space for all eligible candidates free of charge as their service to their readers or listeners.

I have promised the people of the Town of Amherst that I will serve them honestly, diligently and selflessly, and I am doing just that. I want to prove to you and to the world that success in politics can be achieved through honest means. It is hard, very hard, to change the status quo, but I have faith in the power of the people.



SATISH MOHAN

Amherst Supervisor