

Four in running for pair of trustee seats in Dryden

BY STACEY SHACKFORD • CORRESPONDENT • MARCH 14, 2009

DRYDEN - When village voters go to the polls on March 18, they will have a full roster of candidates to choose from to fill two trustee positions.

For the first time in recent memory, Republican caucus members had a selection of potential candidates as several people came forward to fill the seats left vacant when Deputy Mayor Bob Witty decided not to seek re-election, and Randy Sterling put himself forward for mayor.

Party members nominated former Rotary president Paul Rachetta and hometown newcomer Monica Armstrong. Both will also appear as on the Taxpayer First party line.

Rachetta, a communications worker at All-Mode in Freeville, moved to Dryden 10 years ago. Since then, the father-of-two has gotten involved in recreation, as a coach for Sertoma soccer, Kiwanis baseball and spring lacrosse, and served as president of Dryden Rotary Club. He ran unsuccessfully against Democrat Jason Leifer for Town Board last year.

"As a person who is very active and involved in our community, I have a very good sense of what my village neighbors want their community to be," he said. "My civic involvement along with my various past leadership experiences allows me to bring good insight and a fresh perspective to the people who I will serve as a member of the village board."

Armstrong's roots in the community run deep - her grandfather was the village barber, her grandmother was court clerk and her mother was the village's first police clerk - and the 37-year-old administrative assistant at Cornell University said it is now her time to serve.

"Our community needs to have new faces get involved," she said. "I know of so many people that live here who want to change things and talk about get involved but do not do anything about it. I want to get more involved and hope I can motivate others to become more involved in the village. I also want Dryden to remain a community where people stay and call this place home. Many of us have family members and friends that have moved away. My hope is that one day, Upstate New York can thrive in the job market."

Another self-described "hometown girl," Lisa Valentinelli, will be running on the Democratic and Better Dryden tickets. Valentinelli, 43, daughter of Town Justice Joe Valentinelli and a special education teacher at the MacCormick Secure Center, previously ran for the position in 2007 and lost by just a few votes.

"I love that the Village of Dryden is a place where neighbors know and help neighbors-as they did when my father was ill this past year. That's why I've returned to Dryden to raise my son Garrison," she said. "This village means the world to me. I can't wait to restore the essential community spirit that will help Dryden village prosper and grow in this new century."

The other Democratic and Better Dryden candidate is Mary Ellen Bossack, a school counselor who has previously served three terms as village trustee and on the county youth board for 10 years. Bossack, 64, describes herself as a "practical optimist" and a communicator with a penchant for problem-solving who refuses to give up finding answers to difficult questions.

"I believe my experience on the board will make it easier for me to hit the ground running and get to the center of issues," she added. "I know the people of Dryden and have served the children in many ways both in school and in advocating for them with a variety of agencies. I have spent over 40 years as a teacher and counselor. I can listen and remain non-judgmental."

For more information on the candidates, www.drydendems.org and drydenrepublicans.org.

