

## About Paul Andreassen

Two years ago Paul Andreassen (Independence Party) was approached by many individuals, including both current and former political party leaders, all of whom encouraged him to run for the town supervisor position. Yet Paul, being the gentleman that he is, declined in deference to Jim Bruno, a Republican, and Fred Costello, who is also a member of the Independence Party, since both had announced that they would be running for supervisor. So, instead Paul Andreassen ran for town councilman and received overwhelming support from the Democrat, Conservative and Independence Parties. In fact, Paul was the big “vote-getter,” garnering 2,799 votes on the Democrat line, 983 on the Conservative line and 520 on the Independence line, for a total of 4,302 votes, beating all the other candidates.

One of the reasons, among others, that he decided to run for town supervisor this time around is the fact that there was only one candidate running, and Paul rightly feels that the voters deserve a choice. Paul made it quite clear, from the day that he announced, that he would seek the endorsement from all political parties because it is his intention to represent *everyone*, not just those from specific parties. Paul is more interested in serving the people than a political party—in fact, his saying is, “*people not politics.*”

When Paul announced that he would be running for town supervisor, he went through all the proper channels: interviews, carrying petitions, etc., seeking endorsements from all the

parties, just as he had promised to do.

What I find so ironic is that two years ago those same current and former leaders of the Democratic Committee who had praised Paul up and down for being a “great individual,” with “integrity” and who supported him wholeheartedly for election, this year have denied him even an opportunity to a fair and honest primary, in spite of the fact that he had gone out and collected more than 300-signatures from Saugerties’ Democrats to get on their line. Is this fair? When evaluating the parity of impartial opportunity here, a bit of the background should be taken into consideration: both Paul Andreassen and Fred Costello are members of the Independence Party. One could easily understand Democrats’ support of Costello if he were a registered Democrat, but he’s not. Since both contenders for the nomination are not Democrats, there really is no valid reason to support one and deny the other. A nomination for endorsement under such circumstances should have come by the primary process.

Then, after denying Paul Andreassen an equal opportunity to vie for the Democrat endorsement through the process, negative letters began to appear in the Saugerties Times, again from the same current and former Democrat leaders, criticizing Paul for petty nonsense. The same people who had so vigorously encouraged him to run two years ago, have now turned their backs on him and in the process have turned theirs back on their very own party members as well. I hope that the 4,377 registered Democrat voters will recognize that it is actually their right to decide whom they want on their line through the primary

process that has been taken away from them and that they will see through all these phony, negative attacks against Paul Andreassen. For Democrat voters who agree that Paul Andreassen is the best man for the job but was treated unfairly, their only option is to vote for him on another line.

I've known Paul Andreassen for more than forty years and I can honestly tell you that he is a unique and exceptional individual. In all the years that I have known him, he has consistently demonstrated a love for his hometown and its people. Don't be fooled by the petty, negative attacks that crop up like clockwork every political season. Paul is a good man of integrity, honesty and pride, who quietly does a damn good job, and I think most people know that. Accordingly, I would suggest that the contrarians (those who paint everything with a negative brush and go against anything an opponent says or does) stop playing that game and focus on the issues instead of dealing in negativity.

And now, last but not least, the "opponents," calling Paul out for abstaining on a vote was a very cheap and totally unfair shot at Paul. Under Roberts Rules of Order (the bible of running a meeting), when someone abstains, it is neither a "yes" vote nor a "no" vote—it's not a vote at all. Occasionally the legislator, councilman, or whatever, might just say, "Present." When a board member doesn't have all the information necessary to make an informed vote, the only proper and responsible action is to vote "no," with an explanation, or to abstain.

George Heidcamp