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Wednesday, October 05, 2005

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## Opinion

## Letters to the editor

I have no vendetta against Atkinson's chief

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To the editor:

I am writing this in the hopes of explaining the rhetoric floating around Atkinson for the last 18 months. It has been said that I am pursuing a vendetta against Chief Philip V. Consentino, that I have not told the truth, that my conduct borders upon harassment and that I have filed "endless complaints" against the chief. These statements aren't true!

Candidates night 2003, I was one of four people who raised conflict of interest issues. Chief Consentino responded by saying that there would be none, as he would have Sgt. Baldwin present police issues, and he would not deal with them. To his credit, he did not vote on police matters for a year, during which time he demanded that Barbara Stewart leave the board during employee discussions as her brother-in-law is our elected road agent, and there could be a conflict. She gracefully agreed. I never complained about any of the myriad times the chief discussed or dealt with police matters because he didn't vote, and the people elected him.

On March 15, 2004, Chief Consentino opened a public hearing on withdrawing money from the donation account. To his credit, he adjourned this matter until all three selectmen could be there (Selectman Boyle was absent). The next day (off camera), I read in the minutes that Selectman Boyle walked out of the meeting saying that he believed it to be illegal for the chief to handle the public meeting or vote on this issue. Chief Consentino and Mr. Childs voted to withdraw the funds. A week later, I filed a code of ethics complaint.

This was not personal. Every town official in Atkinson raises their hand and swears to uphold the code of ethics ordinance. I believe that a public official has to go the extra mile to avoid conflict, not skirt the edge of the law. At the time, I thought this was a simple matter. The code of ethics committee had just eight months before ruled that it was "the most blatant conflict they had seen" for Mrs. Stewart to deal with employee matters. I thought they would do the same for the chief. All I have ever asked was for the committee/court

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to ask him to recuse himself on police/elderly matters.

On May 10, a judge ordered Chief Consentino to recuse himself from discussing, deliberating and voting on those issues. He violated the agreed order and was found in contempt. He is now appealing to the Supreme Court at taxpayer expense!

There is no vendetta. I have received dozens of tickets in my 30 years of driving; it would be ridiculous for me have a vendetta over every one. I have only filed two code of ethics complaints against the chief and appealed one to court. All the rest of the controversy stems from the chief's attempts to fight those orders, and mischaracterize me and my motivations.

MARK R. ACCIARD

Atkinson, N.H.

**Elections came before our Constitution**

To the editor:

While I applaud The Eagle-Tribune's Newspaper in Education program, I would be remiss as a parent if I failed to point out a possibly misleading representation that was presented in Part 3 published Sept. 29. In the section titled "The Making of the President," an excerpt reads "Remember, this was before anyone knew about elections or political parties." Let's not forget that the Massachusetts Legislature, the General Court, was established in 1691, nearly 100 years before the ratification of the federal Constitution. Although it's true that most of the 13 Colonies had governors who where appointed by the British sovereign, lieutenant governors and members of state legislatures were, in most instances, elected by the people. While political parties were new, elections had long been the norm.

ROSEMARY GIL

Lawrence

**Malpractice system works like a lottery**

To the editor:

I am writing this letter as a practicing obstetrician in the Merrimack Valley who is concerned about the state of the medical malpractice system. I was shocked after reading your recent article about the \$40 million award in Lowell for a birth injury. In my opinion, the medical malpractice system has become an entity very much like the lottery, where plaintiffs take their chances and hope that they will get a ...