

Sour Grapes? Colton Caucus Under Dispute

By LARRY ROBINSON

COLTON - The chairman of the Colton Democratic Party says there is no reason to change the township's Democratic Party system from a caucus to a primary and that those Democrats proposing the shift are nothing but disgruntled party members espousing their own personal sour grapes.

"I call it sour grapes, that's all it is," said Daniel C. McNamara, caucus Chair and Committee Member of the Democratic party in Colton. "A petition or primary system would be equally fair, but the system that we have has worked good for Colton for many years."

McNamara is one of four Democrats in the town of Colton who helps oversee the party's caucus system in the township. He and the three other committee members are

being challenged for the party leadership by Roger Dusharm and Christine Murphy in the town's first district and Dennis Eickhoff and Al Gotsch in district number two.

The current Democratic Party committee members are McNamara, Joan Kilroy, Sally Seymour and Mary McKinley.

In recent weeks the challengers for the party leadership said that if elected on Sept. 9 they plan to change the current caucus system in Colton to a primary system in hopes of drawing more public involvement into the Democratic Party process in the local township.

But, in a recent letter to the editor to the *Daily-Courier-Observer*, McNamara dismisses the suggestion as nothing but the ramblings of an angry few within the party who he claims have thus far been unable to carry out their own political agendas.

"Some of those seeking a seat on the Colton Town Committee would have you believe that there is something amiss using the caucus system," writes McNamara. "As chair of the August 2007 caucus we conducted a successful caucus. Two board members and one assessor were nominated and

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elects the following November. Some of those supporting other candidates at that caucus are the same group that have harassed town officials at public meetings, published numerous letters with misleading information and generally did not conduct himself or herself appropriately."

McNamara's announcement in support of maintaining a caucus system in Colton comes on the heels of a previous statement by a new slate of Democrats in the town of Colton hoping to create a primary-based system for choosing candidates for office instead of holding a traditional Democratic caucus.

In a previous letter to the newspaper those political newcomers said they needed

public support to sweep aside the old Democratic party machinery in Colton.

"Colton's current procedure for selecting Democratic candidates for the general election is a caucus. This has long been the town's practice and we feel it is time for a change," wrote the new candidates. "The last caucus was held in Aug. 2007 with only 28 voters participating, currently there are close to 400 registered Democrats in Colton's two districts."

Elected officials in Colton include the town supervisor, members of the town council, highway superintendent, assessor and town clerk.

"We believe a primary would better serve the people of Colton by increasing the opportunity for voter participation," argue the Democratic

challengers. "Whereas a caucus might only last an hour or two, a primary would run from Noon until 9 p.m."

All four positions on the Democratic committee are up for grabs next week with the winners serving a two year term at the party's helm.

In addition to the Democratic party committee election the Republicans will also be selecting new committee members in Colton as well.

Currently serving on the GOP committee in Colton's District one are Grace Hawley and Ronald Robert, and District two is represented by Nancy Shea and Marion Thomas.

Challengers to the GOP incumbents are Peggy Mousaw Reginald Stowe in District one and Richard Wood and Edwin Wright.