

# The Quill



## Without fear or favor

"Listen, Tom Henry," the voicemail message began. The caller had my attention.

He didn't leave his name, but the caller said it was obvious that the Minuteman was "colluding" with the Westport Weston Family Y in its effort to gain approval for a new facility at Camp Mahackeno.

"It seems clear to a lot of people in town that the Minuteman is supporting the Y," the caller said, adding that we would be losing readers if that support continued.

Had it not been for the vaguely unsettling tone of the caller's voice, I would have been amused. It wasn't too long ago, after all, that I'd been getting calls from supporters of the Family Y, complaining that several Minuteman stories on the Mahackeno issue had been biased against the Y.

Early this week, the caller, who this time gave his last name, left a new message, saying he "very much appreciated that people are saying the Minuteman is not in the pocket of the Y." He was apparently persuaded of our leanings toward objectivity by last Thursday's Minuteman story on the Mahackeno proposal.

The caller urged us to avoid "one-sided, lopsided" reporting. "Your paper is one of the caretakers of Westport," he concluded.

Well, far be it from us to disagree with a reader who expresses that final sentiment.

For the record, the Minuteman has purposely refrained from taking an editorial position on the Mahackeno proposal. We are leaving it to the Family Y to present its plan to the pertinent town bodies — the Planning and Zoning Commission, at the moment. And we are leaving it to the opponents of the proposal to make their own case.

Our only effort has been to encourage a decision that complies with local and state zoning and environmental regulations, and is fair to both the Family Y and the neighbors and other town residents who would be affected by the Y project.

Frankly, after more than a decade during which the issue has been simmering prior to its current rolling boil, there isn't much new to say about the Y's effort to find a new home.

But we will continue to open our pages to Letters to the Editor on both sides of the issue, with the only requirements being that they be as concise as possible and refrain from personal attacks against individuals or groups.

We view the Mahackeno proposal, whichever way it is ultimately decided, as vitally important in its ramifications for Westport's future.

To paraphrase Adolph Ochs, describing his own New York Times in 1896, it is the Minuteman's mission, with regard to Mahackeno and all other issues of the day, to give the news impartially, without fear or favor, regardless of interest involved; to make of the columns of [the Minuteman] a forum for the consideration of all questions of public importance; and to that end to invite intelligent discussion from all shades of opinion.

So keep those calls and letters coming.