

EDITORIAL

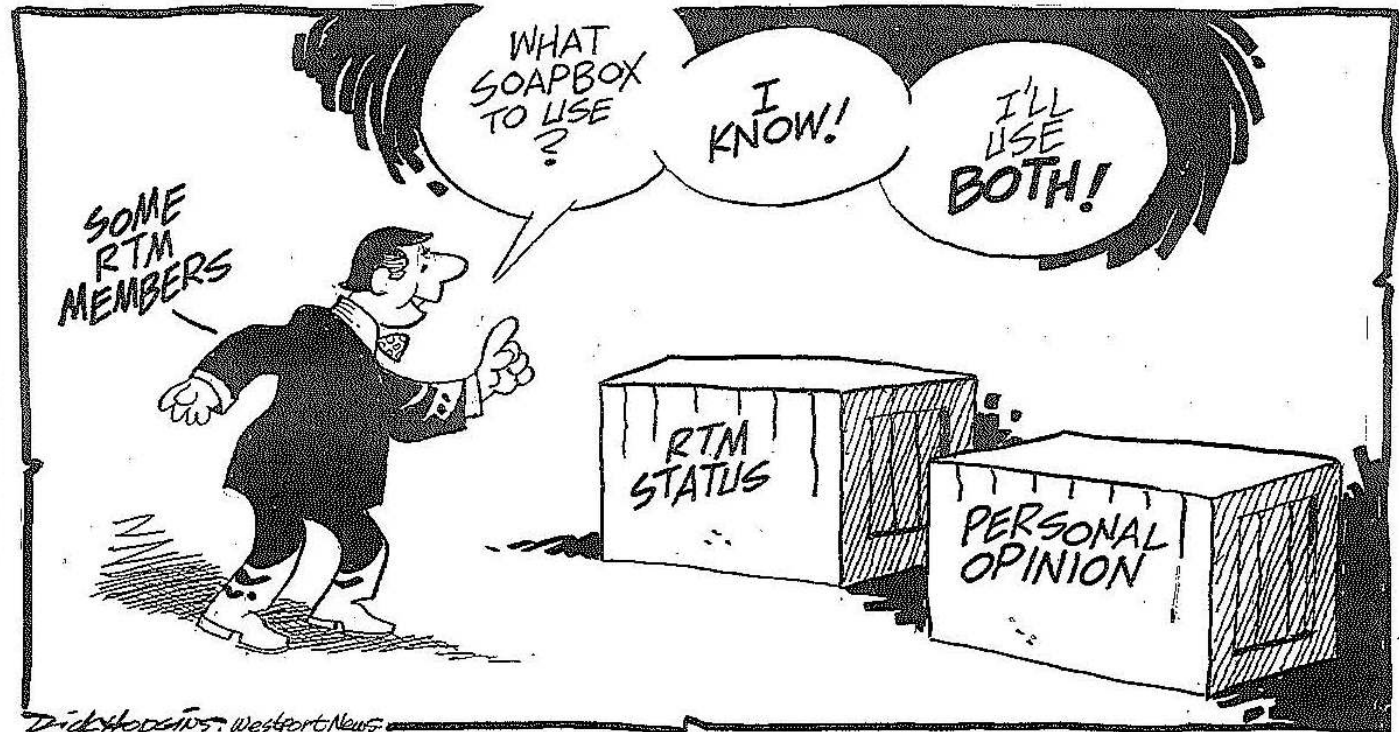
Speak for Yourself

Nobody knows what percentage of Westporters (or Westonites for that matter) are in favor of a new Westport Weston Family Y at Camp Mahackeno. Nobody knows how many people are against it. And, nobody knows how many people really don't care much one way or the other but are tired of hearing about it and seeing the signs. We have a hunch those people might be the *real* majority.

You can't make truly meaningful assumptions based on meeting attendance, the number of letters to the editor, a small survey, signs or a petition. The last time we checked, we were getting as many letters for Mahackeno as against it. The only way to really find out how the town feels is to hold a town-wide referendum. We wish there'd been one.

A new development is RTM members actively lobbying against a new Family Y at Mahackeno. First, we had an RTMer involved in anti-Mahackeno flyers and fund-raising. Now, we have 10 RTM members submitting an OpEd/Letter to the Editor to the local newspapers arguing against the Family Y's proposal.

RTM members are certainly entitled to have a personal opinion, as we all are. But, when they put "RTM District X" after their name, it changes things. Are they speaking in an official capacity? Are they speaking for their constituency? Are they speaking for themselves?



In a Feb. 15 editorial titled "Once More Into the Breach" on the Mahackeno controversy, we posed the following question, "Is the job of elected town officials to represent their constituency or to promote personal agendas? Where is the line?"

Unless a RTM member has canvassed his or her district to find out the prevail-

ing opinions, how can he or she purport to represent its views?

Their own body, the RTM, had an opportunity to overturn aspects of the Conservation Commission and Flood & Erosion Control Board approvals of the Family Y proposal but failed to do so.

We think the line has been crossed. Using one's status as an RTM member to

promote a personal agenda is unseemly. It is one thing to vote your conscience, it is quite another to engage in public advocacy that urges the derailing of governmental due process.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with voicing personal opinions, they just need to be clearly identified as such and not presented in some other guise.