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Challenger for coroner makes allegations against incumbent

The Democratic challenger took shots at his opponent at last week's Hoopeston Neighborhood Watch meeting.

Raymond Skidmore, who did not attend the September meeting when he and incumbent Peggy Johnson were scheduled to speak, addressed the Watch group on Oct. 6.

Skidmore cited a "miscommunication" for not appearing at the September meeting and said he is seeking the office because of personal involvement with the coroner's office. Last Memorial Day, Skidmore said, his step-father, who lived in the Henning area, died and spent an hour and a half lying on the floor waiting for a deputy coroner from Hoopeston.

He criticized Johnson's handling of the coroner's budget, saying she is spending too much on deputy coroners. The former coroner spent only \$2,000 on contractual deputies while Johnson spends \$11,000-

County coroner responds to claims made by challenger

In a telephone interview last Thursday, Vermilion County Coroner Peggy Johnson responded to allegations made by challenger Raymond Skidmore.

Regarding the 90-minute wait after his step-father died, Johnson said the office received the call at 2 a.m. The deputy coroner from Hoopeston had to be paged, get ready and drive to the scene. "We try to respond as quickly as possible," she said.

As for the charge that she spends more on deputy coroners, Johnson said her predecessor had 2.5 people on staff. When she became coroner, she eliminated the part time deputy in favor of using contracted deputy coroners. "It's really no more money," she said of the \$11,000 spent annually. "That hasn't raised in years."



SKIDMORE

\$13,000, paying the deputies \$50 per call. He also accused Chief Deputy Coroner Mike Rortvedt of transporting bodies on county time and charging the county. "If I'm elected, there'll be no double-dipping," he said.

Skidmore said he is not the only one unhappy with the coroner. "I know some families in the Hoopeston area are very disappointed," he said. He alleged one man died and the preliminary cause of death was listed as suicide when the actual cause of death was determined to be a pulmonary embolism. He alleged an inquest was denied until the man's wife hired two attorneys and that the preliminary cause of death caused a two-year delay in the widow receiving the man's life insurance.

Skidmore is a volunteer firefighter and an EMT.

For the last four years, he has also taught other EMTs. For the last four years, he has taught other EMTs

Regarding Skidmore's claim that chief deputy Mike Rortvedt "double-dips" by transporting bodies on county time, then charges the county, Johnson said Rortvedt only charges mileage for using his personal vehicle.

Finally, regarding the incident Skidmore cited of the man whose widow had to fight to get the insurance because of the listed preliminary cause of death, Johnson said insurance companies do not use a preliminary cause of death to make decisions about insurance benefits.

Skidmore's claims came as a surprise to Johnson, who last week faced her opponent at a candidates' forum in Danville. "He didn't bring up any of this then," she said.

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 and on the Internet at www.justthefacts.net

Organizers thank volunteers

On Tuesday Sept 28 between 80 and 90 men and women had something in common: helping a community member and his family in a time of need. On October 7 again something in common: the loss of a friend, a neighbor, a husband, and a father. After a fierce battle with leukemia, Dick Wilson developed pneumonia, which was too much to handle after two rounds of chemotherapy. He passed away Thursday afternoon.

Had Dick made it through, we know he would have personally thanked those who offered their time, machinery, and personnel to harvest 750 acres of soybeans in 3.5 hours, and the whole 1500 acres in seven days.

On behalf of Dick, family, and friends, thanks to:
Arends Bros for the use of a combine for the entire harvest.

Kaufman Grain provided several trucks.

Monicals Pizza provided lunch and delivered to 5 locations.

Crop Production Services provided labor, lunches, and fuel.

Bank of Rossville, lunches

Larry & Ron Masengale, machinery, labor, and organizing.

Briefly

Tiny Tots

"Jammy Time" is the theme of this week's Tiny Tots story program at the Hoopeston Public Library children's room. Children make wear their pajamas.

Tiny Tots meets at 6:30 p.m. Tuesdays and 10:30 a.m. Fridays and is for children ages 1-4 who are accompanied by an adult.

Obituaries

WATSON - Joseph A. Watson, 25, of Hoopeston died at 2:59 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 9, 2004 at Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital. Funeral services will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Hamilton-Orr Funeral Home. Burial will be in Floral Hill Cemetery. Visitation will be 4-7 p.m. Tuesday at the funeral home. Memorials may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.

Letters to the Editor

Jim Weston, labor and organizing.

Craig Hubner, labor and organizing.

Allen Decker, machinery and labor.

Eddie Layden, machinery and labor.

Charlie Gernand, machinery and labor.

Dewain & Kevin Moore, machinery and labor.

Tom Beckner, machinery and labor.

Brian & Jim Benjamin, machinery and labor.

David Boyer, machinery and labor.

Charlie & Matt Rademaker, machinery and labor.

Mark Rice, machinery and labor.

Steve & Mark Willard, machinery and labor.

Brad Herman, machinery and labor.

Larry Ritter, machinery and labor.

Dave Magee, machinery and labor.

Alan Douglas, machinery and labor.

Jerry Douglas, machinery and labor.

Jim York, machinery and labor.

Tim Thornsborough, machinery and labor.

Kevin & Gary Weinard, machinery and labor.

Bob Ray, machinery and labor.

Charlie Kentner, machinery and labor.

Bud & Bill Mathews, machinery and labor.

Gary Kinnett, machinery and labor.

Lloyd Smith, labor

John Green, labor

Richard Simpson, labor

Although we mourn the loss of a friend, we should be

Police News



A **36-year-old** Hoopeston man reported Sunday that damage was done at 3 Parkview Court.

Daniel J. Crowley, 24, of 715 E. Thompson, was arrested at 1:01 a.m. Monday at Fifth St. and Orange. He was charged with driving while license suspended and was released on bond.

Weather



Partly cloudy today and tonight. High 65, low 46. Tomorrow, chance of showers. High 63, low 43.

For current weather conditions, call Hoopeston Weather Service, (217) 283-6221.

both thankful, and proud that we live in a community that will pull together in such a manner. God Bless.

Organizers of the harvest

Stop criticizing cheerleaders, staff

To all the Hoopeston Hornet Cheerleader Parents,

For the past weeks we've been listening to a lot of people complaining about our girls cheerleading coaches and as parents, we feel that enough is enough!! We feel that Coach Kellie Underwood, Trisha Curry and the rest of her coaching staff have done and continue doing an outstanding job with our kids. These women have taken on the responsibility of not one but all squads for the simple fact that if they didn't there would not have been any cheerleading program this year. Coach Underwood is more than qualified to head this program due to the fact of her past experience both in performing and coaching. (don't you think we should consider ourselves lucky to have them?).

Along with praise comes constructive criticism which is a given in any team sport and cheerleading isn't any different. So we feel that the time is now to quit all the criticism and to offer our coach and her staff our complete and total support. To our coach, outstanding job, keep up the good work and most important...Thank You for everything!!!

William & Carol Fewer
 Cheerleader Parents

CLASSIFIEDS

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HOUSES FOR SALE

3 bedroom house. \$22,000. (217) 283-7928 280-293

LOST & FOUND

Lost: 2 year old black, long-haired male cat, "Heba." No collar. Reward. Last seen a week ago in 500 block of West Lincoln. Call 283-5209.