

Q & A with the Candidates for Churchville Village Trustee

Vote for two of the four candidates on Tuesday, March 20, Churchville Village Offices, noon to 9 p.m.

David W. George, 30. Employment - Roberts Wesleyan College. Community organizations - Good News Community Church – Musician and Evangelism Director, Riga Bicentennial Committee, 140th NY Living History Organization – president, Hunt Club 66 – founder and active member. Resident in Village of Churchville 5 years. No previous elected positions.



John Hartman, 42. Education: BS in Computer Science, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, 1987. Employment: Senior Software Engineer, Eastman Kodak Co. Community organizations: Churchville Charrette Steering Committee, youth basketball referee. Churchville village resident 3 years.



Westside News Inc. asked the questions printed below:

What do you think is the most valued characteristic of the Village of Churchville? What was it about the village that made you want to live here?

I believe the most valued characteristic of the Village of Churchville is its hometown feel. This is a tight-knit community in which people come together to solve problems. For example, I've witnessed neighbors helping neighbors dig snow out of their driveways. Our community provides a natural environment where friends and neighbors work together around busy work, school and recreation schedules. I've seen community-wide interest in the political process where, for the most part, folks don't come with an agenda, they come to get informed and be involved. My wife, Sarah, and I, chose to settle here after a tiresome search for "just the right setting" in which to put down our roots. Sarah is a graduate of Churchville-Chili High School and we've known quite a few residents of the village for many years. Again, the hometown atmosphere of Churchville made choosing to live in the village quite easy.

Churchville has much to offer, from the natural beauty of the Black Creek, to parks for recreation, to a variety of friendly businesses. But the one thing that I feel is most special here is a strong sense of community. Churchville is a place where everyone knows their neighbors and is there with a helping hand. The strong interest and participation in the charrette process shows people care about the future of this community.

Why are you running for village trustee and what are your goals if elected?

I am running for village trustee because I thoroughly enjoy living in Churchville. The village is a great place to live and raise a family. I believe that I can contribute to the maintenance of our heritage while planning for the future. The people of this community work hard to stay informed, and the government of the village works just as hard to provide the necessary information to the residents. I believe that the doors of opportunity are wide open in a setting such as the Village of Churchville offers. I believe that with an informed public such as we have, we can keep taxes low and provide opportunities for the people to take even greater ownership of this community. This is my first and most important goal.

Much is happening in the village these days: the charrette, the new fire station, and the joint comprehensive plan with the town, to name a few. Being a part of the charrette process has been very rewarding and I want to expand my contribution to the future of Churchville. My wife, Anne, who is a member of the Riga Recreation Committee, and I believe strongly in the value of community service. One of my goals is to ensure the new fire station is completed with the least impact to tax payers possible. Secondly, after nearly a year of hard work, the Charrette Vision Plan is ready to enter the implementation phase.

What experience, skills and abilities will you bring to the village board?

At the top of my list of experience, skills and abilities that I will bring to the village board is my interest in the vision for our community. My leadership experience with the church, the 140th NY Living History Organization and Hunt Club 66 grew out of my active participation and full investment in their respective purposes and mission. Leadership was not something I sought after, rather, others promoted my passion, acknowledged my abilities and provided the opportunity to make good on their investment. Along with that leadership experience I have sought to honor the trust given me by educating and promoting others to do and to be their best. This all culminates in ministry opportunities in everything I do. I believe in the vision for our community and I believe I have something to contribute toward helping to shape our future and reach our goals.

My career as a software engineer requires strong analytical skills, good communication abilities, creative problem solving, as well as project management skills. These are all necessary skills to be an effective trustee.

What is your position on economic development in the village and the village's future?

My position on economic development in the village is quite simple. Keep taxes low and encourage local entrepreneurs to set up business. We have many very successful small businesses in Churchville and that is in large part due to the strong sense of community found in the Village. Folks pay regular visits to the coffee shops and eateries, unique shops, and services available in the village. These are just a few of the excellent economic opportunities of which the residents of Churchville are proud and, I believe, that to the best of our ability to control taxes, folks will continue to invest in and take pride in local business.

A healthy and vibrant central business district is a key component in the future success of the village. If the village is to grow as a community we must present the benefits of doing business here. And as the business district grows to provide for the needs of our existing residents, new residents will be attracted as well. All this can be accomplished while maintaining the character of the village.

How can the Village of Churchville and the Town of Riga work together in cooperative ways on projects? What projects could be pursued? Do you think the relationship between the two municipalities needs to be improved? How would you work to improve the relationship?

The Village of Churchville and the Town of Riga can work together in cooperative ways on projects. The most recent example is that of the Joint Comprehensive Plan. A planning committee made up of residents of both municipalities drafted the plan over the last several years. Currently, the village board and the town board are working together on the finishing touches of a well researched document and will be ready to adopt this plan as a general guide toward controlled growth, and maintenance of our identity as a rural community. Another joint effort is the new firehouse and planning is underway as to how the village and the town will work to see this vision become reality. Every relationship takes work. The Village of Churchville and the Town of Riga have good people in their respective government. I believe that my participation with the village will bolster that relationship as I've come to know several of our leaders (town and village) beyond the political arena.

The best way to work together is to remember we have a common goal of making the town and village places where people want to raise their families, our children are safe, and have a high quality of living. The town and village are complementary to one another and not in competition with each other. We have two very important joint issues currently with the fire station and comprehensive plan. Cooperation is paramount and by maintaining a respectful, professional relationship all our goals will be accomplished. As trustee I would build on my current relationship with all the members of the town board and look forward to working with them on these and future joint projects.

What do you think is the most important issue facing the village?

The most important issues facing the village are the maintenance of our identity through controlled growth. Churchville is going through a period of change and with that change, all of the associated opportunities. We see successful small business in operation. We see well planned residential expansion for the village and the Churchville Charrette has produced a well thought out plan for our future. As we seek to reconcile our development with that of the Town of Riga through the Joint Comprehensive Plan, we will discover countless opportunities to work together to create a successful future while maintaining our traditional identity.

In the short term the new fire station is necessary. We have a volunteer department of the highest caliber but their facilities are inadequate. The proposed station will give them what they need to maintain their high standards. To minimize the tax burden, the village and town must help secure grants, low interest loans, private donations, and other sources of funding, including the use of landfill revenue. Longer term the continuing development of the Central Business District and overall land use within the village are important issues. The finalization of the charrette together with the joint comprehensive plan will provide us the necessary road map to the future. Additionally there are many creative ideas and suggestions from the charrette participants for what they would like to see in the village.

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Diane F. Pusateri, 46. Education – Associate Degree – Retail Management, Internship Degree – Mid-Management, Certificate in Business Management. Employment – General Manager of Bon-Ton Department Store, Greece Ridge Mall. Retail Manager for 25 years. Community organizations – Planning Board Chairperson since 10/05. Planning Board member, 4/05-10/05. Zoning Board of Appeals 10/03-4/05, Charrette Steering Committee 10/04-present. Member of Union Congregational Church. Churchville resident – 6 years



Don Suter, 76, Parnell Drive. Education: Graduate of East High School - Rochester, NY - Class of 1948, Additional educational courses in Accounting and Data Processing. Military Service: US Army Veteran during the Korean War era. Employment: Retired December 31, 1991 from Specialized Printed Forms, Inc., Caledonia, NY. My position at the time of my retirement was Manager of Data Processing and Systems. Village government: Served as a village board trustee for over 15 years and have served as the chairman of the village planning board for two years. Community Involvement: retired member of the Churchville Volunteer Fire Department and a founding member of the Churchville Fire Department Ambulance Squad. Currently, a member of the Churchville United Methodist Church where I have, over the years, served as Lay Leader, Chairman of the Administrative Board, Sunday School Teacher and member of The Inter-Church Council. Former member of the Board of Directors of the Churchville Chamber of Commerce and in 1997 was awarded "Citizen of the Year" for the Churchville/Riga Community. Member of the Steering Committee for the Churchville Charrette. Involved in other community organizations such as the Lions Club, Moose Lodge and The Salvation Army. Churchville resident 49 years.



Westside News Inc. asked the questions printed below:

What do you think is the most valued characteristic of the Village of Churchville? What was it about the village that made you want to live here?

I think the most valued characteristic of the village is the small town atmosphere and the hometown feeling it has. Neighbors knowing and helping one another. Our village is one of the best-kept secrets there is – you feel at home here no matter where you are from. I wanted to live here because it is a great place to raise a family. Churchville has friendly people, is safe and has great schools. I love to walk and enjoy the creek, the history and the events here. I wanted a place our children could always call home and where we could stay and grow old. Churchville is close to so many things yet far enough away to get away from it all.

It is my belief that the most valued characteristic of the Village of Churchville is best described by Mayor Don Ehrmentraut's Welcoming Message on the village website where he says "Keep in mind that our best resource is our residents. They know Churchville is a great place to live, work and play." When I first came to Churchville with my family, 49 years ago, we were immediately made welcome and quickly became a part of the community. Over the years our appreciation for Churchville has continued to grow and now this relationship continues with our children who all live within the Churchville area.

Why are you running for village trustee and what are your goals if elected?

I am running for village trustee because I want to continue to be a part of our future and help preserve what we have here together. I have enjoyed serving as the Planning Board chairperson and on the Zoning Board of Appeals over the past 5 years and now wish to join the Village Board. My goals are to establish an LLC (Limited Liability Corporation) to attract business and obtain additional grant monies. Identify a liaison between the town and village boards to improve communication and identify opportunities to partner on projects. I will work with the village board to keep taxes low, continue to have good service and to enhance the village business district. It is important to implement the ideas in keeping with community's Comprehensive Plan. It is time to team more closely with the town board to implement ideas together and look for cost saving methods.

I am running for reelection because I feel that I can continue to make a contribution to our community. Having almost 20 years of experience in village government will be of considerable importance as we make the transition to the new leadership of the Village Board. My goals are many. They include enactment of new zoning codes to protect the character of our village, implementation of the recommendations of our residents during the Village Charrette process, help guide the redevelopment of the Luster Coate property, work with the Churchville Volunteer Fire Department with the construction of their new facility, and work to maintain a safe and healthy infrastructure by upgrading our street lighting and sidewalks.

What experience, skills and abilities will you bring to the village board?

I am currently the Planning Board Chairperson, worked on the Zoning Board of Appeals for the village and have been an active member of the Charrette Steering Committee. These roles have given me a solid foundation to build upon to continue to serve the village. I have taken advantage of the training workshops afforded me during my planning and zoning board tenure and this education has enlightened me and sparked my desire to serve our community as village trustee. I have been a general manager for 9 years and district manager for 11. This career path has trained and developed me in customer service, budgeting, expense controls, planning, leading, and challenging my staffs and myself. I have had extensive training in all these areas and have grown to be proactive, lead, listen and engage those around me to get things done. I have excellent communication and negotiation skills as well as a positive attitude and will be passionate and enthusiastic in serving our village.

My knowledge of the community and its history is of utmost importance. Knowing who we are and where we have come from is vital when planning for the future. Also as a retired Manager of Customer Service Operations and Data Processing Systems, I learned first hand the importance of listening to the thoughts of others and keeping open the lines of communication.

What is your position on economic development in the village and the village's future?

We need to have "smart growth" and be true to our comprehensive plan so we grow in a way to enhance our lives. We need to establish an LLC, (Limited Liability Corporation) with local stakeholders to secure grant monies for local project funding. Working with the Charrette Steering Committee has helped me learn how we can continue to build on our natural resources and history to attract businesses to us. We have excellent opportunities, such as Black Creek, the flour and bean mills and our parks to become more of an educational and recreational destination. We have to promote ourselves as welcoming business and advertise our value to increase our business tax base to keep residential taxes down.

Economic development is one of my favorite areas of interest. In recent years, I have been deeply involved in bringing new business to the village including several new businesses along the North Sanford Road area, new shops in the central business district and also the Washington Street and East Buffalo Street area. I will continue to work to bring new retail services and light industry into the Village as the opportunity arises.

How can the Village of Churchville and the Town of Riga work together in cooperative ways on projects? What projects could be pursued? Do you think the relationship between the two municipalities needs to be improved? How would you work to improve the relationship?

We need to open the lines of communication and create a stronger partnership with the town to benefit us all. We should identify a liaison to attend town and village board meetings so we can better coordinate communication and work together on common projects. The boards should be working closer to examine the budgets and cost efficiencies through planned joint sessions. Evaluate to see what more can be saved and invested for future projects such as the firehouse and a community center as well as long term reserve funds. We should exploit avenues to obtain grant monies together to fund projects. Advertise to attract business as well as implement improved walking, biking and family activities throughout our village and town. I will work with the village board to reach out to the town board and invite them to collaborate on common issues. We would openly share and communicate ideas and concerns on a regular basis.

I sincerely believe that at this time the communication between the Churchville Village Board and the Riga Town Council members has never been better. Currently we are working together to finalize the Joint Comprehensive Plan project. Other joint projects that we are planning together are the new Churchville Volunteer Fire Department facility, additional development of Monroe County parklands within the Village, Inter-municipal agreements on sharing of equipment and services and the joint development of a new GIS system.

What do you think is the most important issue facing the village?

I think the most important issue facing the village is "Smart Growth". We need to grow and prosper as a community yet protect our longtime history of agriculture and rural character. We need to improve our tax base through new business yet ensure we do this in a way that preserves what we have now. The LLC would be a great starting point to get this done. I have heard many great ideas shared at meetings and believe we now need to create synergy and momentum to make them a reality. We need to reach out to everyone in the village to become more involved and offer the talents and insights they have to support the common good. We should be working harder to obtain grant monies to help fund qualifying projects. I would like to see us host more events such as festivals, art and car shows and music festivals to improve our visibility to neighboring towns and businesses as well as to celebrate what we have here. I would be honored to be part of the leadership needed to run the village and would do my very best.

In my opinion the most important issue facing the Village at this time is the need to immediately prepare for the potential future growth within the village. Currently we have in effect a moratorium preventing any changes or redevelopment in the village's two business districts until such time as we complete the revisions to our zoning codes which control such actions. These code changes are now in their final stages and should be ready for enactment in the near future. Secondly, we are in the planning stages of rebuilding our existing Electrical Substation. This upgrade is extremely important to our ability to continue to supply our residents with reliable and affordable electric service. We also have to continue to make Churchville a beautiful walking community. The recent extension of sidewalks and street lighting from Churchville Elementary School along Park Road to West Buffalo Street is a perfect example of what can be done to enhance safety and the attractiveness of our village.