

# **Letter To The Editor: A Plea For Responsible Discourse and Return to Community Values**

by Bob Coles

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**To the Editor,**

As a public servant with over three decades of dedicated service, I have witnessed the shifting landscape of community engagement, particularly with the rise of social media. I write today with deep concern regarding the South Roxana Community Facebook Page. What began as an initiative I once supported—conceived by two friends to

provide information and unite our town—has diverged alarmingly from its intended course, now undermining the democratic principles we hold dear.

Having distanced myself from social media, I find these platforms too often echo misinformation and foster a craving for immediate attention rather than cultivating an informed and active citizenry. This page, which I initially supported the launch with the premise of offering a beacon of truth, has instead deviated into a one-sided forum where dissenting voices, especially those of our town's elected officials and employees, have been blocked from the page and prohibited from seeing the stories being spread about them. I can attest that the trust and bonds I and many other employees have built within our community far outweigh the narratives spun on any social media page.

I have had numerous residents complain that when they have attempted to post a positive story about the community or the government body, the Facebook page blocked it from being posted. The censorship of positive contributions and fact-based corrections reveals a betrayal of the transparency and community service that the page initially promised. Lifelong residents have reached out, saying they have privately messaged the page administrator about the inaccurate information, which resulted in them being blocked from the page.

The recent handling of information regarding our village's Halloween parade float illustrates this troubling trend. Armed with the truth, the administrators of this page chose instead to propagate inaccuracies, seeking to incite division and influence public opinion ahead of elections. This behavior is not just manipulative—it threatens to blemish the integrity of our elected leaders at no fault of their own. Knowing the information posted is misleading and false, call on the Facebook community page "To remember this at election time." It is disheartening, yet no correction has ever been posted to rectify the problem.

Such incidents are stark reminders of the power and impact of social media on our community's fabric. When achievements are overshadowed by jealousy, and the animosity toward governance festers unchecked, the result is a corrosion of the solidarity that has long been our town's cornerstone.

I ask the administrators of the South Roxana Community Facebook Page to think about their actions. The path they have chosen serves neither fairness nor truth nor does it contribute to the welfare of our community. I challenge them to redirect their efforts toward the noble aims of informing accurately, connecting genuinely, and uplifting the spirit of South Roxana.

In the wake of these reflections, I appeal to my fellow residents to engage with social media cautiously. The information you are being fed has historically been biased and

misleading. Remember the importance of seeking complete and accurate information and not letting the digital discourse undermine our sense of right versus wrong and the truth at hand.

The village currently has the most educated mayor in the history of our town, with Mayor Callahan just completing his doctorate and the board bringing forth a senior center, park improvements, and many other community-orientated projects that have never been accomplished in this town's history.

Everyone has a right to a voice, no matter how inaccurate their post may be. I would suggest trying to turn that negative energy into getting to know your elected officials and see how you can better the community in which you live.

I sincerely hope this message resonates with the hearts and minds of the community, rekindling a commitment to the principles that have always made South Roxana a place to call home.

**Sincerely,**

**Bob Coles**

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