

Character assassination

To the Editor:

Lately there have been letters in this paper that have been highly critical of the Aquinnah selectmen. These letters have been written by disgruntled residents who prefer the comfort of their living rooms to the public meetings where they could have a dialogue and the ability to share constructive suggestions in a public forum.

One such letter was a personal attack on me and has taken Aquinnah politics to a new low. John Walsh has stated that, "Jim Newman does not care." Mr. Walsh has licensed himself to take my words totally out of context, disregarding the situation and the emotional tone of the meeting.

I was asked at the meeting to break down the educational costs for the children who reside in tribal housing. My response was that the town of Aquinnah was going to pay for every child in this community to attend public school, and at that particular moment in time, I did not care about the cost. I do care more about children.

Every town in this country pays for the education of town/city children, regardless of their housing situation. It is a large and totally irresponsible leap for John Walsh to say that I do not care and to suggest that I am not concerned about fiscal responsibility.

Before moving full time to Aquinnah, I was a Peace Corps volunteer and then a public school teacher for 30 years. I live on a fixed income, and my income is as impacted by taxes and inflation as much as anyone's. As Mr. Walsh has stated, we are in the process of looking for outside funding. Along with Peter Temple, I helped initiate the effort.

We live in a small community; the selectmen are volunteers, not professionals. To sit back and publicly condemn us will not bring change. What we need is positive public input and support in order that we can move forward together. John Walsh's letter only further divides an already fragmented community and is totally inappropriate. It is nothing more than character assassination, which has no place on the Aquinnah scene.

Jim Newman
Selectman
Aquinnah