

Local Voices, North Zone, April 15

April 15, 2009

Let the healing begin. Now that the local elections are over, it is time to start working together for the common good.

The worst part about campaigns, especially local ones, is the friction they create between neighbors, church members, those in civic organizations of all types and between rival groups of candidate supporters. It is this aspect that upsets me the most, even more than unsightly political signs in the public parkways.

We now have new mayors and village presidents, new park commissioners, new school board members and some new faces at townships. After the swearing-in ceremonies, the time to get to work will be at hand. The challenges all these folks face are very real. Our communities now need visionary leadership, not political assassins.

We have flooding issues that demand large and permanent solutions.

We have aging infrastructure problems.

We have big challenges to provide better education and better park facilities.

There is a heavier demand on social services and food pantries for those in need -- from vets to seniors to the newly unemployed.

Let's put away our petty disagreements that may have developed in the heat of recent campaigns and find new ways for everyone, whether from different political parties or just from different points of view, to work as a real community.

Our challenges across the board require diligent work to find real, affordable solutions.

I've been reminded of a favorite boss I had many years ago who had a particularly poignant saying. He would say, at times like these, that "there is no future in the past." He was right.

We hope and pray our newly elected representatives, at all levels, find the spirit of cooperation and put aside any hurt feelings caused by the political name-calling and pointless accusations that unfortunately arose throughout the duration of the campaigns. It's time to move on.

-- Dick Barton, Park Ridge