

Letters to the Editor

Dear Fellow Reading Residents:

My name is Bill Griset and I am running for School Committee. I am a trial lawyer, mediator and arbitrator, and have an office in Wakefield. I have lived in Reading since 1976, and am married to Linda Spence, who grew up here. My father-in-law, Ernie Spence, was a science teacher at Parker, the first Principal of the Birch Meadow School and, for almost 25 years, Assistant Principal at Reading High. From Ernie and Linda I have learned a great deal about the deep history of excellence in Reading's public schools. And, make no mistake about it, our public school system is one of which we can all be proud.

As a trial lawyer I spend my workday negotiating and problem-solving on behalf of clients. As a mediator and arbitrator I work with parties in conflict, helping them to find common ground and come to the resolution of whatever matter brings them either to the courts or to my office. In both capacities I have learned how to speak in a persuasive way and, perhaps more importantly, how to listen. Listening, discussing, negotiating, advocating and problem-solving-these are the skills which I hope to bring with me to the School Committee.

Among the many issues cur-

rently facing our schools, it is clear that we will need to continue to work with the Commonwealth in the implementation of MCAS tests and the new curriculum frameworks. The recently-approved fifth elementary school will continue to be a topic of discussion, particularly in my neighborhood on the north side of town where the school is to be built. I hope to have an opportunity to work with my neighbors and those in the Dividence Road neighborhood in order to make sure that the school is sited and accessed in such a way as to provide safety for our children and, at the same time, the least possible disturbance to the affected neighborhoods. And then there's the matter of what to do with the high school. My emphasis has always been on program, teachers and curriculum, rather than simply on "bricks and mortar."

However, it has become clear to me in recent years that, if we are to keep pace with changes in curricula and continue to provide top-quality education to our students, we must soon address the issue of how best to deal with the reconstruction of Reading Memorial High School. One ready example of the deficiency at the high school is in the area of girls' athletics, and any casual examination of the facilities at the high school clearly leads to the conclusion that something needs to be done to "even the score" for the girls.

I am not a newcomer to involvement in the workings of our town and schools. I served for a brief time in 1986 as an appointed member of the School Committee, and have also had the pleasure of serving on the Finance Committee and CPDC. Additionally, I have participated in at least a half-dozen committees and sub-committees within our school system, including service on a prior Superintendent Search Committee, the Killam School Improvement council, and others. I am currently a Town Meeting member, and also a member of the Reading High School Council.

I am not a single-issue candidate. I have a much broader perspective than that. I know where our schools have been, I understand where they are today, and I hope to have an opportunity to help us as a town move them forward in the 21st century. In order to do this, I need your help. Please vote for me on March 7th.

Sincerely,
Bill Griset

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Middlesex, ss. Officer's Return, Reading:

By virtue of this Warrant, I, on February 22, 2000 notified and warned the inhabitants of the Town of Reading, qualified to vote on Town affairs, to meet at the place and at the time specified by posting attested copies of this Presidential Primary Warrant in the following public places within the Town of Reading:

Precinct 1 J. Warren Killam School, 333 Charles Street

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Griset thanks voters

Thank you for your support of my candidacy in Tuesday's School Committee election. I am truly humbled by the extent and breadth of that support, as I am by the level of participation and effort so many people brought to our campaign. To my Campaign Manager Gael Phillips-Spence, Treasurer Paula Perry, my wife Linda, good friends Jean Rossettie, Denise Gallagher, Chuck Wayne, and the more than 200 others who were actively involved in so many aspects of the campaign, I give my heartfelt thanks. All across town people held neighborhood coffees, addressed and distributed postcards, wore buttons, displayed lawn signs, contributed money and, in the final few days, held signs on the common and at the polling place. To those who spent precious hours of free time over the past five weeks working with our campaign I am deeply appreciative. To those who came out on Tuesday and supported me with their vote, I thank you. I pledge to do everything in my power to live up to the trust you have placed in me, and to always view my role on your School Committee with a solemn sense of responsibility.

Congratulations are also in order to Tim Twomey, whose nine years of dedicated service to our town were rewarded with a vote of confidence on Tuesday. Ray Porter, who ran a vigorous and highly visible campaign, also deserves credit for raising the level of interest in our race, and for adding his voice to the public debate.

And now, as I begin my service on the School Committee, I look forward to working on the challenging issues confronting our community and our schools. Reading is a strong and resilient community, and I am absolutely certain that we can more than meet this challenge.

Bill Griset