

There's one obvious choice in St. Mary's sheriff's race

LETTER TO THE EDITOR Janet Bello, Mechanicsville
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After attending the St. Mary's County Chamber of Commerce sheriff forum earlier this month, it's clearer than ever who would be the best choice for the next sheriff.

Candidate Todd Fleenor is definitely not the guy for the job. No disrespect, but I'm only validating his own words. I'm not sure how to feel about a sheriff's office being led by a man who says, "I wear my emotions on my sleeve!"

Words can't describe how uncomfortable I would be if this big guy showed up to my house wearing his emotions on his sleeve trying to help me in an emergency situation. Retired deputy Sgt. Fleenor does get one point for when he agreed that crime in the county is out of control and higher than it's ever been in history.

It's so high, because Sheriff Tim Cameron (R) is too focused on candidate Steve Hall's campaign. Every week it's something else: Sheriff Cameron endorses Steve Hall, Sheriff Cameron holding a meet and greet for Steve Hall, Sheriff Cameron is blah, blah, blah for Steve Hall. Geesh - this should be illegal at this point. It's no wonder that the respectable deputies, under the "leadership" of Sheriff Cameron, have to suffer through discomfort while the agency is sued and investigated by internal affairs; it's because Sheriff Cameron is too consumed with Hall's campaign.

Speaking of Hall, who is a captain in the sheriff's office, has Cameron hired him a professional speech writer? During the forum when Hall would answer questions, he would read directly from his four-page answer sheet that his "ghost writer" prepared for him. It was like being read a bedtime story when he would speak. It's hard to even remember anything he said during the entire form. He was very boring and robotic. Could you imagine the deputies ever wanting to sit there and listen to him speak, or respect him? It was pretty tough to stay focused on him "reading" to us during the forum.

It seems as though two candidates (Fleenor and Hall) have teamed up with Sheriff Cameron to bully John O'Connor. That's astonishing, because the sheriff's office would be lucky to have a man with such dynamic characteristics as the head sheriff. O'Connor is a Purple Heart recipient, combat veteran and public servant for over two decades.

He has years of experience in making decisions for entire communities in this county as a current county commissioner. He always votes to increase the budget to the sheriff's office (\$34 million to \$57 million) because he understands the importance of safety. He has firsthand knowledge of running a budget.

O'Connor is truly the only candidate conducting himself in a professional manner. During the forum, when he was asked a question, he had very sensible answers with clear plans. When he was being vilified by the other two candidates, he still had very sensible rebuttals and didn't seem to take the berating personally.

O'Connor spoke about using facilities the tax-payers have already paid for, like the empty building on Great Mills Road; making sure deputies are homeowners; increasing traffic administrators; and empowering the deputies by surveying them on how they believe the agency's culture could be shifted for the betterment of the county. All very sensible plans.

The only thing I can remember that Hall said during the forum was something about working in closets to help with recruitment, not sensible plans.

We must treat this sheriff's election like our life and safety depends on it. John O'Connor is the only logical choice for the next St. Mary's County sheriff.

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