

# The Post-Standard

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## Our opinion

# Some Choose, Some Lose

What could have been and what should have been on Tuesday

**E**lection Day 2005 is history. Some observations:

**Inaccessible to voters.** It's one thing for voters to choose not to go to the polls. It's another when the choice is made for them because of inaccessible polling sites. Preliminary results from a survey by Arise and Syracuse University's Center on Human Policy, Law and Disability Studies found flaws at several polling sites around Onondaga County.

Of the 70 sites surveyed, 100 percent did not have audio tapes in voting booths; 98.5 percent did not have Braille or large-print instructions; 57 percent had inadequate or no parking for the disabled; 44 percent had inadequate entrances; and 34 percent had inadequate signage. In addition, some election workers did not know how to assist the disabled.

Such findings are not only unacceptable, but illegal under federal laws that require voting accessibility for the disabled.

**No-show voters.** The nail-biter was, of course, the Syracuse mayoral contest that produced the closest mayoral race in 80 years. When the votes were counted Tuesday, Democratic Mayor Matt Driscoll had 15,766, compared to Republican Joanie Mahoney's 14,608. The Driscoll-Mahoney contest was that close partly because so many people stayed home. Imagine the margin if each party had been more successful getting out their vote. As of Oct. 28, the city had 69,767 eligible voters — 15,216 Republicans and 33,537 Democrats.

**Fed-up voters.** Acting Oswego Mayor William Dunsmoor said Oswego residents were really voting against fellow Republican and former mayor, John Gosek, when they chose not to re-elect Dunsmoor to his Common Council seat. There might be some truth to the charge. Oswego has

had a string of disturbing events involving its top leadership, including Gosek's arrest for allegedly using a city cell phone to solicit sex with teenage girls and the suspension of Police Chief William Ruggio for allegedly possessing stolen property. But Dunsmoor didn't help assure voter confidence by holding down two jobs — as acting mayor and as a city councilor.

Apparently, many voters in Salina were tired of the status quo, too. Although absentee votes may wipe out his 145-vote lead over 10-year supervisor Mary Ann Schadt, 23-year-old Charles Iavarone is already a winner. He has shown that young people do have a part to play in the political process, challenging business-as-usual and political leaders who may run to serve their egos instead of the people.

**Smart voters.** Like their peers around the state, local voters gave a resounding "no" to the proposal that would give the Legislature more power over the state budget. But what truly is needed are voters who have more control over the Legislature, enough so that lawmakers would be less influenced by powerful lobbies and more by the folks who put them in office. Of course, most citizens still have something that can make all politicians sit up and take notice: Their vote.