

A CANDIDATE for Fulton County treasurer says he may have been mistaken when he said he received a dual degree in accounting and business administration. **B4**

SARATOGA COUNTY

Sheriff will face challenger on fall ballot

BY STEPHEN WILLIAMS
Gazette Reporter

A former Corinth police officer running as an independent will be on the ballot this fall as a challenger to Saratoga County Sheriff James D. Bowen Sr.

Jason Longton Jr. of Greenfield is running against the longtime Republican incumbent on the Stop Corruption party line and will be the only challenger Bowen will face this fall.

Undersheriff Michael Woodcock had filed a general objection to Long-

ton's nominating petitions last week, shortly after they were submitted to the county Board of Elections. That filing protected Woodcock's right to make a more specific objection, but his deadline to do so expired this week without further action.

That means that Longton will definitely appear on the Nov. 3 county-wide ballot, said county Election Commissioner Diane Wade.

Bowen, who was appointed by Gov. Nelson Rockefeller to fill a vacancy in 1972, is currently the longest-tenured sheriff in the state. He is seeking another four-year term.

Michael DiGioacchino of Corinth, a Schenectady County corrections officer, campaigned last winter as a Republican but was unable to get enough signatures to challenge Bowen in a primary.

Democrats did not put up a candidate for sheriff this year.

"As soon as I get the word I'm good to go, I'm going to start campaigning. I'm going to do it the old-fashioned way, a lot of shoe leather," Longton said.

He said he plans to accept no monetary donations.

"It has to be independent," he said.

"When you accept contributions, there's always the expectation of something in return."

Bowen did not return a call Thursday seeking comment.

Longton currently works driving a fuel delivery truck but previously was a police officer in Saratoga Springs, Glens Falls and Corinth.

Longton was the subject of a high-profile dismissal case in which the village of Corinth fired him for insubordination in 2004 — and he has been fighting for reinstatement ever since. Most of his campaign Web site, www.jasonlongton.com,

is devoted to the case.

Longton was terminated for continuing a sexual harassment investigation after being told by the Corinth police chief to stop. Longton contends that the restaurant owner he was investigating — who later committed suicide — had political connections that impeded the investigation of his allegedly inappropriate physical contact with employees.

Longton was fired on a hearing officer's recommendation, then reinstated by a court that found that the village hadn't kept a proper hearing record. Longton was then fired again

in 2007 after a second disciplinary hearing. That firing was upheld at the appeals court level, but Longton last week filed paperwork seeking to go before the Court of Appeals, the state's highest court.

In the meantime, the Corinth Police Department was disbanded by the village board and the Sheriff's Department has taken over law enforcement coverage there.

The office of sheriff, which oversees a countywide law enforcement staff of more than 100 as well as the county jail and its staff, currently has a salary of \$106,812.