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Thursday, October 21, 1976

(B-7A) (O-5A)

Three vie in race Sheriff hopefuls air views

By TIM RICHARD

Oakland County Sheriff Johannes Spreen, 54, a Democrat, says that in his first term he has rid the department of politics and cronyism and established professionalism with the help of Under-sheriff John Nichols.

Republican challenger Leo R. Hazen, 52, says Spreen won't cooperate with local police chiefs and wants to leave the local departments.

Libertarian candidate Cynthia Kleiner would allow business people and homeowners more freedom to possess firearms and would concentrate less on such vicious crimes as marijuana and prostitution and more on rape and robbery.

These were the major differences between the two major parties and one minor party candidate for sheriff when they answered questions and public questions Monday in a forum sponsored by the Birmingham-Bloomfield League of Women Voters.

SHOULD THE LEGAL drinking age which was lowered from 21 to 18 in 1972 be raised again to 19, 20 or 21?

Ms. Kleiner, a Southfield resident, former Sun Life insurance agent and currently a volunteer in the Oakland Crisis Center for Rape and Sexual Abuse, said her party's libertarian view is that it is the right of an individual to do what he wants with his own body. If they want to quit bad enough, they'll quit it.

Spreen, a former New York police officer and Detroit police commissioner, said, "I wish they hadn't lowered the age to 18. We know that when we go to accidents and pull their bodies out of wrecks, if they go back to 19, I think it would help police work."

Hazen, a former undersecretary and director of special projects in the county executive's office, preferred a drinking age of at least 19. "I'd prefer 20. Students are getting drunk at lunch and come back to school and have had a binge."

WHAT'S THE MAJOR problem confronting the sheriff's department in the coming four years?

Spreen, seeking his second term, said the question is whether the sheriff is to be

"only a jailer." He said his administration is "in the process of turning around" the situation and has made contracts to handle the police work of 10 communities. Work remains to be done in such areas as consolidation of records and youth investigations.

Hazen said he would "bring unity back to the department." He said he could bring better relations with the communities. He promised "highly trained patrols in the unincorporated communities."

Hazen, defeated by Spreen for the post in 1972, said he would be a full-time sheriff. He charged Spreen with delegating his authority for day-to-day operations to Under-sheriff Nichols.

Spreen replied that it's important to spread the word "by speaking to groups and in particular to students."

Ms. Kleiner, who has never before run for a public office and had no literature or photo available, said there are many faulty people walking the streets and many innocent people who are victims of the police. She promised a "task force" to field public complaints about law enforcement officers.

She also promised more hiring of women and minorities.

IS THERE REALLY a rising crime rate or is this being overplayed by the media? Spreen and Hazen agreed crime is overplayed but Ms. Kleiner had a contrary view.

Many times we feel crime is everywhere. But only part of it is ever reported. The public feels what is the use in reporting crime to authorities?" she said.

There is a rising crime rate," said Spreen, but he said the media have been after law enforcement officers who are bad. I put the blame on politicians who want to get elected and cut taxes.

Hazen said the crime rate is going up with county growth. He blamed the media for causing crime to grow of different types, but didn't elaborate.

WOULD MORE GUN control help?

Hazen said rifles and shotguns for hunting are not the problem. I like to go hunting myself. The real thing is Saturday night specials, cheap handguns.

Spreen agreed that rifles and long guns need no further control. He advocated a minimum five-year sentence for a first offense committed with a gun, 10 to 15 years for a second offense, and for a third offense, throw away the key.

Following the Libertarian Party principle of the less government the better, Ms. Kleiner said allowing business people and private citizens to possess firearms would be a deterrent to crime.

SHOULD THE SHERIFF be continued as an elective office or be appointed, as are municipal chiefs of police? All three candidates favored elections.

If it's appointed, who's going to make the appointment? Hazen asked.

Ms. Kleiner said the people should have the right to choose.

Spreen said Detroit, where the chief is appointed, is an example of a department buffeted by politics. This post of sheriff is the oldest law enforcement position in history. It should be elective, but it should be a nonpartisan election in the off presidential year, and the candidates should have some qualifications.

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