

Mudslinging's taboo for this Tennessean

By TOM LONERGAN

Win or lose, Howard Baker doesn't plan to utter any discouraging words about other Republican presidential candidates this year.

That was the message from the Tennessee senator to a fund-raising party Tuesday evening of about 300 Oakland County Republicans at Roma's of Bloomfield.

According to Baker's tri-county coordinator, Jerry Rosen, an attorney and Birmingham resident, \$35,000 was raised for Baker's campaign at two private fundraisers and the Roma's party.

Tickets for the "open" fundraiser were \$25 a couple.

THREE TIMES during his five minute speech, Baker, told the Republican faithful that he'll run a "civil, honest and decent" campaign and won't "put down any other (GOP) candidate." Earlier this week, The New York Times reported Baker rejected an aide's advice that he start taking on Republican front-runners George Bush and Ronald Reagan.

Referring to next Tuesday's New Hampshire primary, Baker said, "I don't know who's ahead there. I suspect 'undecided' is."

He didn't discuss any issue in detail Tuesday, but Baker said the three he plans to emphasize are national defense, inflation and government regulation.

One Baker campaign brochure lists launching "a national commitment for the '80s to replace the gasoline-powered car. No one will lose the car, instead America will lose its suffocating dependence on oil, oil, oil."

SINCE HE announced his campaign last fall, Baker has consistently hammered away at what he sees as excessive government regulation on business.

"It is time that government minded its own business for a while and let businessmen run their own," says a Baker position paper.

All government forms and questionnaires for small business should be eliminated, said Baker, except the annual tax return.

But in the same paper, Baker calls for increased financial assistance to small businesses, as provided by the Small Business Administration, a federal agency and "expert counsel, advice and training on how to run a small business without going broke."

On defense, Baker has been a strong critic of the SALT (Strategic Arms

Limitation Treaty) II agreement with the Soviet Union, though he voted for the first SALT treaty in 1972. Since the events of Iran and Afghanistan, the SALT treaty appears to be dead.

Baker said he'd "create and show off" a military mobile strike force to protect U.S. embassies abroad. According to his campaign literature, Baker said the country needs "an unmistakable symbol that America will not be pushed around anymore."

BAKER MET with Michigan Gov. William Milliken before attending the three fundraisers but said he didn't ask Milliken for an endorsement.

HOWARD BAKER
"Undecided" ahead



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