

Schaeffer is best bet in district court race

The Farmington Observer endorses Margaret G. Schaeffer for a second term as 47th District Court Judge.

In 1974, Mrs. Schaeffer beat a field of 12 candidates to clinch a six-year term. She moved from reviewing appeals of workers compensation cases to the hectic pace of court proceedings in a single step which required rapid readjustment.

She has made the transition rather nicely. Judge Schaeffer has established roots in the judicial world. She serves on various state and county judicial committees. And in Farmington, she has earned a reputation as a fair-minded judge.

In addition to her judicial experience, she has added community service to her public role. Most

recently, Mrs. Schaeffer began serving a two-year term on the board of directors of the Michigan Metro Girl Scouts Council.

She deserves a chance to continue the momentum she has built during her tenure.

Though opponent Jack G. Burwell could prove to be a competent judge (An attorney for more than 20 years, Burwell also has experience as a labor arbitrator), he was elected to the Farmington Hills City Council for a four-year term last November.

It seems Burwell could better serve the community if he would complete the task he undertook so recently. To shelve it so quickly in favor of the judicial seat raises questions about the sincerity of his commitment to the city of Farmington Hills.

Dem's ghostly candidates thwart political process

The success of this country's political process depends on participation.

And while we understand many individuals have chosen to opt out, we find it mystifying why a major political party would do the same.

But that's the case in three of the four Oakland County Commission races and the 64th State Representative race — all of which touch parts of Farmington and/or Farmington Hills.

Instead of fielding serious candidates, the Democratic party has loaded the ballot with ghostly contenders — unseen by the public and devoid of political stands.

As one frustrated Democrat put it, "We just have decided to extend Halloween for a few more days."

Republican County commission incumbents Dennis Murphy (24th District), William Caddell (25th) and John McDonald (27th) will be re-elected without ever having to answer the philosophical challenge of the opposing Democratic Party.

The same goes for incumbent state Rep. Sandy Brotherton, R-Farmington.

While Caddell is the only candidate who is officially unopposed, in truth the Democratic contenders in the other races are just persons who haven't any intention of being elected, let alone serving.

Only in the 15th County Commission race is Barbara Kukes Goldman running a serious Democratic challenge to Republican incumbent Lillian Moffitt.

But her serious challenge, we know, has nothing to do with a commitment from the Democratic Party. If Mrs. Goldman should win, it would be because of her commitment, not the party's.

Obviously, the Democratic Party has conceded this part of the county to the Republicans as a matter of course.

And that's a shame.

True, even serious Democratic candidates have been defeated in past elections in the heavily Republican populated area. But that is even more reason to try harder in the future.

Politics is more than just running a serious candidate when you're assured of victory. It is an opportunity to debate an incumbent's record, to force that incumbent to respond to the electorate and to present alternatives.

The Democratic Party has abdicated that responsibility.

Brotherton deserves your vote

The Observer endorses W.V. (Sandy) Brotherton for re-election to a fourth term as 64th District state representative.

Brotherton needs no introduction to the cities of Farmington, Farmington Hills and Southfield, which he represents in Lansing. If every state representative were as accessible to his or her constituency, communication with politicians would improve tenfold.

Brotherton circulates his "Coffee Break News," a half-page monthly update of pending legislation, in local restaurants and businesses. He is highly visible in the district. One is apt to see him at the annual Farmington Founders Festival or at a club meeting.

His availability to the press is unprecedented. Once he apologized to a reporter he kept waiting on the telephone for 10 minutes, explaining that he had to come down off his roof where he was patching a leak to answer the call.

Brotherton's politics are tending to be conservative as time passes, but they are probably an accurate reflection of his constituency.

He has sponsored legislation in the areas of criminal reform, intangible tax relief, property tax relief, state administrative policies, school safety, and



aid to senior citizens and the handicapped.

Last year, he introduced a bill to increase income tax deductions on private sector pensions.

EARLIER THIS YEAR, Brotherton called on the state Legislature to cut the level of social services. He specifically objects to its use by persons who have moved out of state, who have jobs but are on strike, and those who quit jobs voluntarily.

Brotherton lashed out at the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) earlier this year for proposing a \$20 million subway study for a system that would run along Woodward from Jefferson to 10 Mile while bus service in the Farmington area suffered.

Since then, SEMTA (following a nine-month delay), finally instituted its small bus (OCART) service in Oakland County.

Finally, Brotherton reluctantly supported a move this month in the House to extend the current state budget through the end of the year.

Restating his pledge to fight tax increases every step of the way, Brotherton believes the state will have a more accurate financial status in December, after the tax proposals are voted upon.

Brotherton deserves a vote of confidence Nov. 4.

Oakland needs a new sheriff

Oakland is unusual among Michigan's metropolitan counties because no one city dominates it. No community has even 10 percent of the population. Getting things done takes a lot of partnership and cooperation.

It is against that background that all county candidates must be assessed.

While we admire Sheriff Johannes Spreen's ideas of a modern urban sheriff's department and his tough but humane approach to law enforcement, it has become abundantly clear the two-term sheriff fails to meet Oakland standards of cooperativeness.

For the last eight years, Spreen has been living on his laurels as a New York and Detroit police executive. We have heard too many monologues that he is "a professional with 39 years experience" and everyone else is a "politician."

Spreen has been at war with local officials, county officials and particularly with Republican Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson. Yet Spreen made no effort to recruit a Democratic candidate to take on Patterson and even now won't endorse the Democratic nominee, Martin Krohner, against Patterson. Spreen denounces the child killer task force, the organized crime task force — almost anything anyone else has put together.

Spreen needs to be replaced as sheriff.

JAMES Y. STEWART is the Republican nominee. Frankly, Stewart's experience is narrow (30 years with one small department, Huntington Woods, half as public safety director).

And yet Stewart has been president of the South Oakland Chiefs of Police and the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police. He has the confidence of most other professionals in law enforcement.

Stewart's attitude is one of cooperativeness, of being willing to work with others in a complex megalopolis.

In that context, we can endorse James Y. Stewart for sheriff of Oakland County.

AFTER EIGHT years as prosecutor, a Senate try and two petition drives, L. Brooks Patterson is losing some of his rough edges. He is safe for a third term as prosecutor.

Patterson has an instinct for knowing what is gnawing at the public viscera, and for better or worse he tries to offer a solution. In office, he has set goals for professionalizing his staff and processing cases and has worked at reaching them. And if he's "flamboyant," as his critics say — well, that's no crime in America.

We still oppose, however, his capital punishment campaign.

Four years ago, we supported Daniel T. Murphy for a second term as county executive, but asked him to stop running against outsiders and learn regional cooperation.

Murphy has done so. He learned to deal with the Detroit mayor without giving away the store. Murphy has also continued to give the county precisely what he promised — prudent management at the lowest tax price. He has earned a third term.

Brodhead tuned to constituent needs

Since being elected in 1974, U.S. Rep. William Brodhead, D-Detroit, has ably served 17th District constituents.

We recommend that voters, Republicans as well as Democrats, cast their ballots for Brodhead in next week's election.

Although the more politically conservative residents may have reservations about Brodhead's voting record, they should remember that through the years he has gone to great lengths to serve the entire constituency on a day-to-day basis.

Concerned residents can be assured that if they have a question or a problem, a call to Brodhead's local or Washington offices will produce positive results.

If he is unable to solve your problem, his staff will find someone who can.

We believe this to be commendable, considering that many other congressmen don't come nearly as close to such responsiveness.

In a district as diverse as Brodhead's (northwest Detroit, Redford Township, Southfield, Lathrup Village and the Farmington community), it is nearly impossible to satisfy everyone ideologically.

Instead, Brodhead has opted generally to stick with his liberal philosophy when voting, yet seeing to it that all of his constituents can rely on his congressional staff for aid.

More importantly, Brodhead has responded to the

changing times and its political tenor. He certainly isn't the same liberal who went to Washington in 1974.

The more conservative can feel comfortable with many of his stands. He has endorsed the philosophy of providing tax incentives to boost auto sales and provide aid to industry to increase its competitiveness.

He has endorsed balancing the federal budget, although he is opposed to a Constitutional mandate to do it.

He also has moved farther right in his stands on defense spending, endorsing expenditures in some areas yet calling for belt tightening in others.

Our stands

PROPOSAL A (Smith-Bullard tax shift) — An outstate raid on the treasury. NO.

PROPOSAL B (drinking age) — 19 is realistic. YES.

PROPOSAL C (Coalition tax plan) — An ornamented grab-bag. NO.

PROPOSAL D (Tisch tax cut) — Minority rule on tax proposals? NO.

PROPOSAL E (prison construction tax hike) — There's a war against crime. YES.

PROPOSAL G (end immunity for legislators) — Our present law is archaic. YES.

PROPOSAL H (lieutenant governor appointment and duties) — A cleanup proposal. YES.

Moffitt deserves re-election; Goldman makes a valiant run

Lillian Moffitt is regarded as one of the brightest, hardest working members of the county commission. She deserves to be re-elected to her fifth term in the 15th District.

This district includes southern Bloomfield Township, Southfield Township, northwestern Southfield and eastern Farmington Hills.

Ms. Moffitt's position as vice-chairman of the county board demonstrates the regard with which she is held by fellow commissioners. She is also a member of three important committees — finance, personnel and public services.

This commissioner does not produce sensational headlines, but she quietly and effectively does her work behind the scenes. She is always well-informed and conscientious about performing her duties.

While Ms. Moffitt gets high marks for her commission work, she must work to be more visible, especially in Southfield and Farmington Hills.

Her opponent, Barbara Kukes Goldman, distinguished herself by conducting a vigorous and enthusiastic campaign. Hopefully, Ms. Goldman will return another day for a second try at public office.