

## points of view

## Oakland politicians play by the rules

THE TIME was ripe for such a rumor. It surfaced in mid-April at the Oakland County Republicans' Walled Lake gathering, and it was bigger news than Ed Meese's speech.

Dan Murphy is resigning as county executive, said the rumor mill. Balderdash, or words to that effect, replied deputy executive Patrick Nowak and PR lady Susan Singer the next day. Dan just had minor surgery, and he would be back at work next week.

And they were right. MURPHY, the only executive Oakland ever has had since voters adopted the system in 1974, hadn't planned to seek a new term in 1988 — until then-prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson began eyeing the post.

Murphy ran to keep Patterson out.

Now, in Wayne County, sheriffs, clerks, treasurers, drain commissioners and registers of deeds have a habit of quitting (or dying) in mid-term, enabling tiny little committees of politicians and the UAW to appoint successors.

But Oakland politicians play by the rules, and it wouldn't be like Murphy to quit in mid-term unless he really were going downhill.

The Oakland GOP, however, is fertile ground for such rumors. Five of the six countywide officeholders are in their middle or late 60s — Murphy, Sheriff John Nichols, clerk Lynn Allen, drain commissioner George Kuhn and treasurer Hugh Dohany. The only kid in the courthouse is prosecutor Dick Thompson, 50.



Tim Richard

One of these years, like maybe 1992, there's going to be a massive turnover.

MEANWHILE, a lot of young men and women are turning middle aged waiting in the wings.

U.S. Rep. William Broomfield, 66, is having too much fun at diplomatic receptions and foreign policy briefings to retire. Figure he'll be around another decade.

So where is an ambitious soul to go?

Nowak, an extremely able soul, would be Murphy's heir apparent if so many politicians didn't dislike him.

Roy Rewold, chairman of the county board, will tell you without hesitation that if Murphy's job becomes vacant, a successor is appointed by the board. It's not like Wayne County, where the charter hands the post to the deputy. Rewold points out cheerfully.

Then we have G. William Caddell, R-Walled Lake, doctor of chiropractic and chair of the county board's finance committee.

STATE SEN. Doug Cruce, R-Troy, must have something in mind. He was Dick Thompson's highly visible

campaign manager, and he has been busy in lots of other contests across Oakland.

Dave Honigman? The state representative from West Bloomfield will try to take Rick Fessler's Senate seat by storm in 1990, even if Fessler doesn't vacate voluntarily.

Fessler? Others may figure his personal problems will doom him, but Fessler has a lot of brass. Don't count him out — for a Senate race or anything else.

George Kuhn? The drain commissioner has latched for Murphy's job in the past, and the Kuhn surname has helped three other family members into office.

Patterson? Far from abandoning himself to accumulating wealth in private law practice, he's working

on an anti-tax campaign. For what long-range purpose?

SO FAR, only partisan offices have been discussed.

Keep in mind Oakland will add four circuit judges and two probate judges in the next four years or so. Those \$30,000 jobs are good for life, once you're in.

And if some district judges move into them, why, their seats open up, too.

For the politically ambitious, Oakland County is the place to be — even if Bill Broomfield hangs on to the turn of the century.

Tim Richard is director of the Suburban Communications News Service. SCC is the parent company of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

## School bus drivers — a truly special breed

The writer, Sharon Lee, is a Farmington Public Schools school bus driver.

SCHOOL BUS drivers are the people who transport your most precious resource but who get paid less than those who haul this country's most toxic waste.

School bus drivers drive in all kinds of weather and must contend not only with the "elements" but with the inconsiderate people who just have to "get in front of the bus."

We are subjected to pre-employment screening that, in some cases, includes fingerprinting, polygraph tests, references attesting to moral character, and psychological tests to determine how the driver responds to stress.

Drivers must go through physical examinations and must pass hearing tests, vision and agility tests. Blood pressure, pulse, weight and urinalysis must conform to established standards.

If physically and mentally qualified, school bus drivers must then learn how to drive a vehicle that

## guest column

could be seven to 10 times longer than today's compact car and hold the equivalent of three 20-man football teams.

AFTER LEARNING to drive this special bus, drivers are then trained in basic first aid, advanced first aid, CPR, pupil behavior management and hazard detection.

They also are trained in transporting children with handicapped conditions, emergency driving techniques, public relations, state and local laws, rules and regulations of the district they work for, as well as in the maintenance of their vehicle.

Drivers undergo an annual physical, an annual review of their driving record, an annual road test of their driving ability and two in-service education programs annually. A school bus driver is required to carry

a special operator's license.

Your school bus driver is a member of the best-screened, best-qualified and best-trained profession associated with the motor industry in this country.

SCHOOL BUS drivers are members of the motor transport industry, which possesses the safest transportation record in the world. School bus drivers are one of the few members of society who are entrusted with the care and safety of children when they are not at home with their parents.

School bus drivers are, at times, nurses, lawyers, judges, psychologists, and once in a while, "referees."

The next time you see a school bus driver, think about all this, and maybe as you drive by give her the famous "school bus wave." No matter where you go or what district you're in, when you see the bus drivers pass each other, you will see that friendly hello wave.

We're a great group of people in a great profession that we dearly love.

## Spring thoughts: Limit terms of office, greed

SOME MISCELLANEOUS thoughts on an almost-warm spring afternoon.

We've got a big job ahead of us — you and I. We've been avoiding it for awhile, but the task just won't go away.

I got to thinking about this recently after a visit to this office from Republican U.S. Rep. Carl Pursell. The congressman, recovered from a hard fought re-election challenge from state Sen. Lana Pollock, came to visit and talk about Washington politics.

With all the scandals we're seeing with pseudo-hero Ollie North, Speaker of the House Jim Wright and John Tower, failed Defense secretary-designate, it might be wise for the us to pull in the leash on the boys inside the Beltway.

Pursell does better than most in staying in touch with the folks at home. But after listening to him for a time, it's obviously impossible for anyone, no matter his intentions, to avoid the suffocating traditions of Congress.

In describing congressional operations, the congressman inadvertently paints a surrealistic picture of powerbrokers more interested in protecting their turf on the numerous committees and subcommittees rather than statesmen who are concerned about doing the best for the country.



Steve Barnaby

A frequent change in national leadership will have an impact on how your tax dollars are spent and on the quality of your life.

Certainly, Pursell being as close to the trees as he is, doesn't see all his colleagues that way. But anyone listening to him describe the scene can come to no other conclusion. Seniority, privilege and collecting money from PACs outweigh national concerns far too often.

When faced with the question of limiting congressional terms to say, 10 or 12 years, he hedged a bit but finally admitted it might not be a bad idea.

Actually, it's about time the American public insists on it. Our

national leaders are losing touch with the nation. By limiting terms, more people would have a chance to serve the country with a much fresher perspective.

This is an issue worth getting excited about. A frequent change in national leadership will have an impact on how your tax dollars are spent and on the quality of your life.

Now all we need is someone to start the ball rolling. Don't expect the folks in Washington to take the initiative. They aren't prone to kill the goose that lays the golden egg.

Sounds like a good idea for most any elective office in the country. We all need to get more involved.

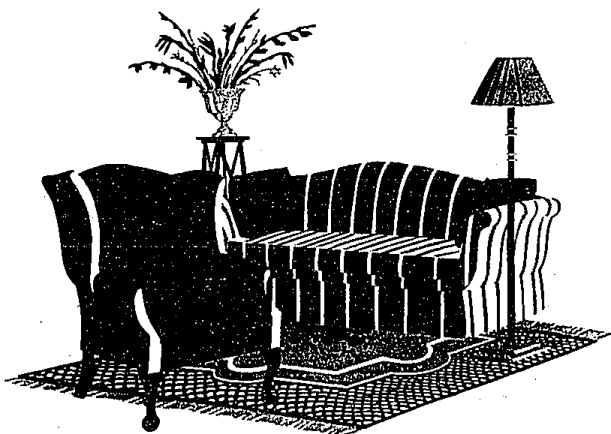
LOOKS LIKE greed is getting the best of us when it comes to developing our suburbs. How many more strip malls, office buildings and condo developments could be on the drawing boards?

Everybody deserves a return on his investment, but the way developers are abusing the landscape with overdevelopment, it makes a body wonder if there is anyone left in that business who cares about planned, sensible development.

Must everyone strive for absolute maximum profit? If it continues, it will be our collective goose that is cooked.

Steve Barnaby is managing editor of the 12 Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

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