

# Lathrup hopefuls answer 5 important questions

By Tim Smith  
staff writer

One challenger is trying to knock one of three Lathrup Village City Council incumbents out of a seat in the Nov. 7 election.

The top two vote-getters earn two-year terms and the third-place finisher chooses a one-year stint. Residents will choose from the following candidates: Incumbents Frank Brock, John Mackay and Mayor Margaret Dickinson and political newcomer Jerry Aiello.

All of the candidates were recently interviewed by the Southfield Economic about the following questions:

- How will the completion of I-696 affect Lathrup Village? Are there any concerns about a rise in crime, which usually follows expressways? What would you propose to safeguard the city if that should happen?
- The recent conflict over freestanding basketball hoops seems to indicate a residential split between longtime residents and newcomers. Is a lack of city unity cause for concern?

cern?

- Along those lines, old versus new, which direction is Lathrup Village government going? Would you describe city leaders as proactive or reactive?
- There has been talk for years about enhancing Lathrup's parks. Where do such projects stand and can we finally start seeing results?
- What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the city council during the next year or two?

The articles on this page are by staff writer Tim Smith.

# Brock wants expanded patrol

EFFECTS OF I-696: Knowing how new freeways have hurt nearby neighborhoods in other communities, Brock said the city recently added a ninth policeman and hired an experienced police chief.

"We'll want to watch those (crime) statistics and make sure that we will hold the chief accountable for coming forward with recommendations if we have an increase in such problems," Brock said.

With the freeway allowing for many more motorists to travel through the city, Brock said an improved, more-active "Operation Watch Lathrup" group is needed.

A positive byproduct of I-696, Brock said, is the business development of land along 11 Mile, which becomes the freeway's service drive.

time employee could be hired during the next year to begin addressing that problem.

**PROACTIVE OR REACTIVE:** According to Brock, officials have acted responsibly, albeit cautiously, because Lathrup is a small city with limited resources. "So sometimes we have to spend a little more time studying issues to make sure we have all the facts before implementing something."

But Brock said the council has been preoccupied with infrastructure issues such as the I-696 construction and the federal mandate to improve its aging sanitary sewer system.

The council moved to repair the portions it could and has met federal guidelines step-by-step. Those steps are important hurdles for the city to obtain money for the sewer project, he said.

The council needs to aggressively pursue developing a "vision of where we want to take Lathrup" in the future, he said.

Already being talked about is getting businesses, residents and officials together to bring a theme to Southfield Road, the city's so-called downtown that Brock said is now a hodgepodge of business.



Frank Brock council candidate

**PARKS:** Lathrup Village recently was denied financial aid for improvements to Goldengate Park, but Brock said the city has applied again to the same source.

With or without the aid, improvements to Goldengate will begin in the spring, using money already available. "I'll push for that activity."

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# Mackay sees an opportunity

EFFECTS OF I-696: The freeway will spur business development, not decay, along the I-696 corridor, Mackay said.

Mackay added that citizens are excited about having a major thoroughfare at their convenience. "I'm one of the residents who is looking forward to using that freeway to and from work."

He doesn't anticipate a growth in crime because of I-696. "I hope we can continue to maintain our record of crime prevention."

"Diversity in the city represents a sound basis for practical decisions," Mackay said. "If you don't have diversity, you may have one-sided decisions that may need to be reverted later."

Families shouldn't be penalized for having young children who are interested in basketball or other activities, however, he said.



John Mackay council candidate

**PROACTIVE OR REACTIVE:** City leadership is "definitely proactive," said Mackay, who stressed that the council actively solicits and meets goals.

During his first year on the panel, Mackay said a list of 10 city objectives were developed, with each council member choosing two of them. Each monitored those goals throughout the year.

"Those worked out very well," said Mackay, whose goals were public safety and beautification. He added that he continues to keep track of those issues.

**PARKS:** Mackay agrees with other candidates about the need

to get to work on improving the Goldengate and Akiva recreation properties.

But another park area Mackay envisions would be at Evergreen-11 Mile. That's the proposed site of an underground septic tank, a

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# Dickinson: Coordination vital

EFFECT OF I-696: Fully aware of a potential rise in crime due to the completed freeway, Dickinson said the city has beefed up its police department and hired a police chief who has attended Lansing seminars on the issue.

Because of the freeway, the police department will also have to coordinate efforts with those of other municipalities because of speeding motorists who cross boundaries, she said.

Although Dickinson forecast a rise in residential property values, she does not anticipate a development boom, primarily because the city is 95 percent built up. I-696 will "put Lathrup Village on the map" for commuters and provide residents with many new recreational and shopping options across metropolitan Detroit.

Those with complaints about the freeway and its consequences have probably moved away from Lathrup by now, Dickinson said.

"I think it's natural for people to want to have their needs met first," Dickinson said, referring to the hoops debate.

**PROACTIVE OR REACTIVE:** City officials have "consistently demonstrated a willingness to make hard choices," Dickinson said.

Dickinson said those include Meeting step-by-step deadlines required to obtain a federal EPA grant for completing the renovation of Lathrup Village's aging sewer system and the city's commitment to a multiple-community recycling effort in Oakland County.

Because \$7.5 million of the \$13 million sewer renovation would not be covered by a federal grant, a bond issue would have to be passed by residents to pay for the rest. Therefore Dickinson said, the council will soon hire a consulting firm to help develop a public information campaign.

Dickinson said the city will keep pushing until it can meet the federal and state guidelines for clean water and air.

"We believe it's time to pass the buck is over. We're at a moment of truth or the environment and economy both," she said.



Margaret Dickinson council candidate

The refurbishing of Goldengate Park, Dickinson insists improvements there can still be made by the spring.

"We recognize parks as an important need," Dickinson said. "Our first priority is to use the funds already set aside for Goldengate Park."

Basic improvements to the park are "do-able," she said. To accomplish that, officials will try to implement a use plan developed by Southfield's parks and recreation department, she said.

The council also hopes to make some progress with the property behind Akiva Hebrew Day School.

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# Think critically

## SHS program changes emphasis of teaching

Through a new North Central Accreditation program, Southfield High School will be measured on how well students are prepared for the increasingly complex world. That is unlike the old "dollars and cents" model, principal Kenneth Wilson said.

Southfield High was visited last week by a North Central team, which began the school grading process, Wilson said. A decision should be made in March, during the annual North Central convention in Chicago.

"The new (program) will be measuring what we're putting into the educational process and what is coming out as a result," as opposed to determining "the total of dollars and cents per student and the number of textbooks," Wilson said.

An example of how the new program works is finding out whether student tardiness decreases, the principal said.

**'There is a myriad of new challenges that students are faced with. We must instruct the process of critical thinking, to learn how to seek out and process information.'**

— principal Kenneth Wilson

that students are able to adapt, Wilson said.

"We used to teach a body of knowledge. Then, if students learned it they could be productive citizens. That's not true now because the base of information is changing so rapidly. They have to keep updating," Wilson said.

DESPITE THE school's shift to the outcome-based program, that does not "belittle what was accomplished under the old standard," he said.

SHS was selected in 1983-84 and 1988-89 as one of the nation's exemplary high schools under the established system, which remains in place as an option for schools.

"It measured what it was designed to measure," Wilson said. "The new one measures our kids and that's our ultimate focus. It's more challenging."

A list of educational objectives will be a byproduct of the visit, Wilson said. The team will return in 1992 and 1993 to measure progress in those areas.

# Aiello expects no crime rise

EFFECTS OF I-696: Because Lathrup Village is a "self-contained city," Aiello doesn't anticipate a rise in crime in connection to the new freeway.

"You get lost. You wouldn't drive to the middle of Lathrup Village to commit a crime. It's a maze," Aiello said.

But Aiello stressed that crime does exist in the city. Maintaining adequate numbers on the police force, as well as having a solid neighborhood watch group, are ways to keep crime in check, he said.

Among other spliffs, Aiello forecasts a decrease in "cut-through" traffic and an increase in property values because of I-696.

that allows them only on garages, and not due to a fragmented population.

Issues where residents are unified include their perception of Lathrup as a conservative, safe, family-oriented community.



Jerry Aiello council candidate

**PROACTIVE OR REACTIVE:** A new aggressiveness and a vision for the future are needed if the city is to overcome what Aiello describes as a "lack of identity."

With I-696 coming through, changes in Lathrup Village are inevitable. As a result, Aiello said "we need to begin acting more aggressively" and help the city reach a higher profile.

Aiello said officials have done things well enough to adequately run the city, but with a touch of complacency, Aiello said.

"I'm concerned that we're not looking into the future far enough or that the perspective of the people making decisions is broad enough," Aiello said.

Aiello maintains that there is potential for Lathrup to become another Indian Village, "a little oasis of renovated homes."

A key for that to happen is for officials to instill confidence in the residents that Lathrup is a solid enough community for them to invest money in renovations, he said.

**PARKS:** Aiello said parks may not

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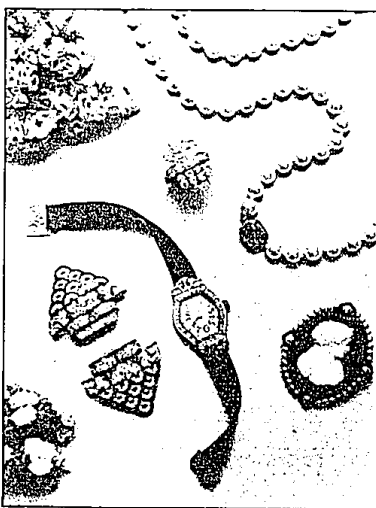
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