

3 announce for circuit court seat

BY MARGARET O'BRIEN

Officially, no one has filed for a new seat on the Oakland County Circuit Court, but it is not for lack of interest.

Everyone else was scurrying to file petitions last week to get on the November ballot for open county commission, U.S. House, state Senate and district courts seats. But former Oakland County Circuit Judge Alvin Gilbert, 46th District Judge Bryan Levy and former Oakland County Probate Judge John J. O'Brien could only announce their intentions to run for the unofficial circuit court seat.

The legislation creating two new circuit court seats, one in Oakland County's sixth district and one in Charlevoix, passed the state Senate last week and is expected to be debated and finalized in a conference committee that will convene tomorrow.

Until H.B. 5228 is passed by a two-thirds vote of the House and signed by Gov. John Engler, no one can file or even collect signatures to get on the ballot to become the 17th circuit court judge in Oakland County.

If it does pass, prospective candidates would have until Tuesday, May 24, to file. The new judge would take the bench Jan. 1, 1995.

Levy, who has been keeping close tabs on the legislation, said the delay will make the election process much more difficult for all three announced candidates.

"It will be quite a scramble

to get the signatures together in time," Levy said about the 5,000-plus signatures needed to get on the ballot.

Levy, a judge for the 46th district court for the last 7 years, said he is ready to carry his criminal justice philosophy of responsible and appropriate punishment for crimes to the next level.

"Even though I have been a very happy district court judge for seven years, I have always wanted to be a circuit court judge," said Levy who lives in Beverly Hills with his wife and two children. He has a bachelor's from the University of Michigan and a law degree from the University of Detroit.

Beverly Hills resident O'Brien, who could not be reached for comment, was an Oakland County probate and juvenile court judge for 14 years and served two terms on the Beverly Hills Village Council. He earned his bachelor's and law degrees from the University of Detroit.

O'Brien's license to practice law was suspended for three years in 1988 when he was convicted of filing false credit card and loan applications.

Alice Gilbert, a judge for 31 years before leaving the bench to run for the U.S. Congress in district 11, has also announced her interest in the \$102,986 per year job. Gilbert, who also could not be reached last week, was an Oakland County circuit judge from 1976 to 1992.

She earned her bachelor's from Wellesley College then went on to Northwestern University for her LL.B.

Legislation would strap banks

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

State-chartered banks would be unable to get into the insurance business if a package of bills in the House of Representatives becomes law.

"We will curtail the ability of state-chartered banks to compete," warned Rep. William Kelth, D-Garden City. "We will not have one state-chartered bank in Michigan."

"We used to have 200 state-chartered savings and loans; now we have one," said Kelth, arguing that tough state regulations will backfire. Of 205 banks in Michigan, 160 have state charters, and 45 are national, said the former banker.

"Banks should stick to the banking business, and insurance companies should stick to the insurance business," said Rep. Mike Griffin, D-Jackson, summing it up.

Rep. Jerry Vorva, R-Plymouth, took a middle ground. He supported a failed amendment that would have prohibited a bank from having an insurance agency in the same office prohibited loan officers from selling insurance; provided for strict fines; and applied industry standards for use of qualified insurance agents.

In the end, the House approved 80-25 the first of a four-bill package designed to keep banks, savings and loan associations and credit unions from selling insurance.

Area lawmakers voting yes: Republican Lyn Bankes of Redford, and Democrats Justin Bevilacqua of Westland, Maxine Berman of Southfield and Richard Young of Dearborn Heights.

Voting no: Republicans Vorva and Deborah Whymann of Canton, and Democrat Kelth.

"There will be action in the Senate," predicted Rep. William

Bryant, R-Grosse Pointe. Banks already operating insurance agencies couldn't be forced out, said Rep. Bill Martin, R-Battle Creek, floor manager of the package. Banks already are selling limited annuities and credit life insurance. Three major Michigan bank holding companies — Comerica, NBD and Old Kent — own insurance agencies of some sort.

The issue arose Jan. 25 when the state Supreme Court ruled the state insurance commissioner lacked authority to stop Ludington Savings Bank from buying an existing insurance agency.

"A lot of people view this as a free market issue," said Martin. "But insurance and banking are extremely highly regulated industries. The issue isn't about whether banks are good or bad guys, or whether insurance companies are good or bad guys."

Martin said credit union lend-

ers were offering "insurance at no cost" but actually rolling the cost of life insurance into the loan. "I don't know if that's blackmail or good business practice."

Backers of the package also argued lenders could subtly coerce borrowers into buying their agency's life, home or auto insurance, or engage indirectly in rebating of commissions.

Keith, author of the statewide banking law in 1986, scoffed at talk about "coercion" because "the industry has not had one complaint about coercion. If I, as a (former) loan officer of Manufacturers National Bank, said you have to buy our insurance to get this loan, my bank could be fined \$1 million a day."

Refer to House Bill 5281 when writing to your state senator; refer to H.B. 5282, 5283 and 5284 when writing to your state representative, State Capitol, Lansing 48909.

'Peacemaker' celebrates its 20th birthday

Gang violence. Drugs. Bitter family quarrels. School problems. Luneliness.

Many teenagers have to contend with such problems.

And many parents try to cope with teens who have those problems.

Sometimes the disparities between the parties is too great and youngsters hit the streets, trying to run away from their problems.

That's where The Sanctuary comes in.

The Sanctuary Inc. serves more than 4,000 families in Oakland County, trying to be a peacemaker between teens and their parents. It offers protection for youngsters

who would otherwise turn to the streets for survival, giving them more of a chance to work out their problems with their parents and siblings.

Founded in Pleasant Ridge and Royal Oak and now expanded to Pontiac, The Sanctuary will celebrate its 20th birthday from 5:30-8 p.m. Friday at the Oakland County Farmers Market in Royal Oak. Ice cream and cake will be free to the public, but guests are charged to bring some non-perishable food item to help feed the children in the Pontiac and Royal Oak centers.

Former staff members will be returning for the birthday celebration, including executive directors Lisa Kaichen and Mary Schaefer. A flight of homing pigeons will be released, symbolizing the emphasis on returning home. There will be clowns and balloons, with picnic-style food available for purchase.

"The community has been wonderful. We want to make this birthday party a gift to all of our good neighbors and friends," said Meri Pohutsky, director of The Sanctuary.

The organization got its start following difficult times for youngsters who gathered at Royal Oak's Memorial Park in the early 1970s after they were barred from

congregating at the shopping center across the street at 13 Mile Road and Woodward. Some of the youths had run away from home and had no place to live. They slept at the park and nearby public places and often were confronted by police.

Volunteers who saw a need found an abandoned photo studio in Pleasant Ridge as The Sanctuary's first home. It was used for sheltering children and counseling their families and it moved to Royal Oak in 1980.

The Sanctuary has a 24-hour crisis line: 810-547-2260.

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NOVUS WHITE SINGLE SLIDER	36-1/2" X 60-1/4"	\$119.95

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