

Vying attorneys deal with trying times Gorceyca, Kaplan enjoy families, fun

**BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER**

Finding leisure time is no easy task for anybody, much less the two attorneys vying to become Oakland County's next prosecutor.

Republican David Gorceyca and Democrat Steven Kaplan — opponents in the Nov. 5 general election — are both family men with small children trying to manage their respective law careers and meet the demands of a high-profile political race.

Yet Gorceyca and Kaplan each values personal recreation, and each makes a point of working some leisure time into their schedules — although not as frequently as they'd like.

On Monday nights, for example, Kaplan occasionally bowls at Country Lanes in Farmington. Some of his teammates are from his high school days at Lathrup High School in Southfield.

"It's relaxing," said Kaplan, 43, whose

average is about 178. He also gets relaxation from slow pitch softball and is the player-manager for a team in Southfield.

Kaplan said he was so impressed with one teammate that he married her. "Lisa and I met when we were trying out for the same team," he said. They now have two children, Erin, 6, and Stacey, 3.

Gorceyca likes to pump iron and work up a sweat, either with aerobics or a good game of racquetball. He works out at the Beverly Hills Racquet & Health Club.

"Most of my leisure time went out the window when the twins arrived," said Gorceyca, 34. He and his wife Carol are parents to Shane and Alexandria, who celebrate their first birthday next month.

Gorceyca enjoys golf, and usually shoots in the low 90s when he's playing regularly. These days, however, he's been mixing golf with politics, like last week when he played at a fund raiser for U.S. Rep. Dick Chrysler attended by a host of Republicans including vice president hopeful Jack Kemp.

Both candidates attribute some of their recreational habits to high school. When he was on the chess team at Lathrup, for example, Kaplan enjoyed going to tournaments for the competitive challenge. He still enjoys chess, but these days — when time allows — he settles for pick-up games, often at the Troy library.

Gorceyca — a regular reserve on the 1980 Brother Rice basketball team that made it to the quarterfinals of the state tournament — still enjoys a pick-up game or playing horse.

Both candidates enjoy reading, often about politics and law.

Kaplan likes reading about U.S. presidents and is currently engrossed in a biography about a Republican . . . Abraham Lincoln. "Sometimes I get anecdotes that I use in closing arguments," said Kaplan, a West Bloomfield resident who for 10 years has been a Macomb County assistant prosecutor.

His political heroes, for the most part, are



STAFF PHOTO BY DAN DEAN
Going for the strike: Attorney Steven Kaplan bowls a mean game. He hopes to outscore opponent David Gorceyca during the November elections.

Prosecutor candidates vow to take tough stance against crime, offenders

**BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER**

With the election less than two months away, both candidates for Oakland prosecutor are trying to give voters an idea of how he would run the county's top law enforcement agency.

Democrat Steve Kaplan and Republican David Gorceyca — along with the prosecutor candidates from Macomb and Wayne counties — were featured speakers Thursday at a meeting of the Metro Detroit chapter of Parents of Murdered Children, Inc., at St. David's Episcopal Church in Southfield.

Kaplan said his office would expedite cases involving violence, particularly homicide. He also vowed to provide weekly updates on individual cases to the families of homicide victims.

Gorceyca reiterated his pledge to never plea bargain on a homicide case and said he would initiate a special youth gang prosecution unit. He said a 1993 criminal justice survey information indicated the existence of 110 gangs in 20 Oakland communities.

Both candidates said they were moved by comments from the 80 or so members of the audience.

A Rochester businessman, for example, made this comment: "You can go home and hug your twins," said the man, who asked not to be identified. "But when we go home, all we have are pictures and the memory of someone in the grave."

Gorceyca, who has year-old twins, said, "I was almost in tears."

Kaplan, who has daughters 6 and 3, said the comments were a powerful reminder of the anguish with which the families of victims live. "In an embezzlement case, you can return the money," he said. "But in murder, the pain is forever."

Kaplan, a West Bloomfield resident who has been a Macomb assistant prosecutor for about 10 years, outlined a 12-point protocol for handling homicide cases. It called for two assistant prosecutors to be assigned to a homicide, with at least one going to the death scene as an advisor to police agencies.

He called for "vertical prosecution," that is the same two assistants staying with a case from district court arraignment through circuit court trial and, presumably, sentencing. That's more efficient than having one assistant prosecutor work a case in district court and another handle it in circuit court, he said.

"Homicide cases would be on a 'rocket docket,'" Kaplan said, with his office moving for speedy trials and fighting adverse rulings by the trial judge.

Gorceyca, a Royal Oak resident who was an Oakland assistant prosecutor for two years before going into private practice, said gang activity should be carefully monitored.

"I don't want to alarm people into thinking the problem is bigger than it is," Gorceyca said. But no community is exempt from the plight caused by gang activity, he said.

Gorceyca said his specially

trained prosecutors would work closely with police agencies to prevent the emergence of rival gangs and "urf wars" and send a clear message: "This is our turf."

Joseph Schramek, spokesman for the chapter, said he was personally impressed with both candidates. The chapter does not endorse candidates, he said, but its members are vitally interested in how prosecutors administer their office.

Schramek said he had not conferred with other members. But he was personally assured by how Gorceyca and Kaplan answered questions about plea bargaining.

See CANDIDATES, B12

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