

County executive candidates skipped over for forum

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

Edward Hamilton doesn't know if he should be offended or disappointed.

But to be ignored by the League of Women Voters?

Hamilton is the Democrat — and decided underdog — running against Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson, possibly the most well-known Republican in southeast Michigan.

But with the Nov. 5 election less than three weeks away, Hamilton is yet to share the podium with Patterson.

Even the League of Women Voters — the quintessential good government organization in Hamilton's eyes — hasn't bothered to schedule a candidate night involving the executive's race.

On Tuesday, the Rochester chapter of the League of Women Voters will have a candidate's night at the municipal auditorium, with the event to be broadcast on cable television.

But the schedule conspicuously omits the race for county executive. Tuesday's schedule, according to President Mary Howarth, calls for candidates

from the 9th Congressional District (Democrat Dale Kildoe and Republican Pat Nowak) at 7:30; sheriff's candidates (Democrat Matt Hogan and Republican John Nichols) about 8:15; and candidates in the prosecutor's race (Democrat Steven Kaplan and Republican David Goreyan) at 9 p.m.

Asked why the league scheduled the sheriff's and prosecutor's races — but not the executive's — Howarth said the problem was time. "There's simply not enough," she said.

The Troy League of Women Voters had initially scheduled a

candidate forum the next night at the Troy Library. That session was canceled, however, because it duplicated the Rochester event, according to spokesperson Karen E. Fabian.

Canceled the Troy even was particularly bothersome to Hamilton. "I'm a member of the Troy League of Women voters," he said, "and they won't even schedule a candidate's night."

It's never been said — at least publicly — but Hamilton suspects there's another reason for the benign neglect attitude toward the executive's race: "People think I will get blown

away."

That's very short-sighted, he said. "This is the top elective position in Oakland County," he said. "And nobody wants to hear the candidates?"

Even as a once-every-four-year political science exercise, the executive's race should get a full hearing, Hamilton said. Ignoring the county's top political post is tantamount to saying the position doesn't matter, he said, or nobody cares.

Not only is the attitude shortsighted, Hamilton said, it's based on a false conclusion. "I'm going to get some votes," he said.

"I'm going to surprise some people."

First of all, the top of the Democratic ticket — with Clinton and Carl Levin — bodes well for him and the rest of the party, Hamilton said.

Secondly, Patterson's obvious decision to ignore him as an opponent will backfire, Hamilton said. "Voters expect to see their elected officials out there — at least every four years. When that doesn't happen, voters react."

In the meantime, Hamilton said he's making the political rounds. "If I see a Clinton sign that's damaged, I fix it," he said. "If I see any Democrat's sign damaged or torn down, I do my best to make it right."

"We're going to surprise some people," he predicted.

Tragedy, comedy come together in 'Marvin's Room'

SRO Productions presents "Marvin's Room," Fridays-Sundays through Oct. 27, at Theburgh, (Clivic Center Drive and Berg Road), Southfield. 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 2 p.m. Sundays. Tickets \$8; \$7 seniors and children. (810) 827-0700.

BY BOB WEIBEL
SPECIAL WRITER

A wise sage once noted that the best way to get through this life is to "play the hand you're dealt." It would be understandable for Bessie in SRO's "Marvin's Room" to demand a reshuffle. She has more than her fair share of bum cards.

Backed with a cast of varying experience and skills (which at times leads to uneven moments) Margaret Gilkes, as Bessie, gives a marvelous, insightful performance of a woman whose heart overflows with love for mankind.

She needs it because her father, Marvin, has been bedridden for 20 years, with enough afflictions to interest Dr. Jack Koverkian. He has suffered a stroke, is diabetic, has one eye and his kidneys are failing. But in typically sardonic humor, Bessie notes that he still has a full head of hair.

Bessie not only has devoted her life to taking care of her father, but looks after her bumbling Aunt Ruth, who has her own laundry list of ailments. Connie Fox as Aunt Ruth creates a wonderfully forgetful and engaging little old lady who means well, but just isn't in touch with reality.

One reality for Bessie is her own mortality. She hasn't been feeling well, and the doctor suspects leukemia. Ronald DeMaagd has some funny moments as a somewhat inept Doctor Wally who cannot remember the name for a tourniquet, and opens a package of sterile cotton balls with his teeth. It is comedy relief before the tragedy.

The only hope is a blood transfusion from her sister's family, and are they ever a piece of work. Whereas Bessie is loving, her sister Lee (played by Robin DeMaagd) is tough as nails and has a thing for hard-drinking guys driving Harleys. She is not about to waste her life taking care of her father, or for that matter, showing much love for her two boys.

Charlie (Justin DeMaagd) escapes to a world of books. Hank (Jason Noel) rebels and is institutionalized after burning down their house. Jim Pierce has a nice scene as his psychiatrist, Dr. Charles. Turns out that all Noel really needs to dampen his belligerence is a little love and understanding, which he gets for the first time from Bessie.

For Bessie, there is only more bad news. The blood types do not match. For the first time, we see she is scared that she "may shut her eyes and not wake up again." But no matter what happens, she observes, "I'm lucky to be loved so much."

And she is back in Marvin's room, tending to his every need, whose presence we are always aware of by means of a reflected TV screen. A nice touch. As is the mood music director John Alwardt added to carry us through the scene changes.

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