

Political party leaders have similar traits, goals

BY PAT MURPHY
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Their power bases are vastly different. So are their philosophies.

But as 1999 approaches, the Oakland County chairs for both the Democratic and Republican parties are lawyers — Democrat Gary Kohut lives and practices law in Troy, while Republican David A. Sebastian has a home and office in Birmingham.

Furthermore, both want to strengthen his respective political party, with an eye on elections in 2000, in addition to any special elections that may be necessary as the county selects a successor to Sheriff John F. Nichols, who died Friday.

Nichols' successor will be selected by a vacancy committee — County Clerk G. William Caddell, Probate Judge Eugene A. Moore and Prosecutor David Goreyca. But if Nichols' successor happens to be a state senator, there could be a series of special elections.

Any special elections — if, in fact, they are needed — were not a consideration when Kohut and Sebastian were elected as heads

of their respective parties.

Kohut was unopposed when he ran for second term as Democratic chair. That doesn't mean, however, that his views of the party, and what it must do to rebuild, are sometimes controversial.

"The party needs to strengthen its grass roots base," Kohut said, at the county level as well as on a state-wide basis.

Sebastian, on the other hand, heads a county party that is both strong and feisty. His election culminated a three-way floor fight, after which Sebastian made a plea for unity. "Yes," he said in response to questions, "pro-choice candidates are wel-

come in the Republican Party.

"Our Republican clubs and organizations will be placed under one umbrella," Sebastian said in his acceptance speech, "to better work together in our communities to spread the Republican message of better education, less taxation and less government."

Sebastian — former president of the 400 Club, the highly successful fund raising arm of the GOP — said he will also focus on money. "A successful fund-raising operation is a key ingredient to getting out the republican message," he said.



David Sebastian



Gary Kohut

Residents weigh in on House impeachment vote

BY BARR PIRT TEMPLETON
STAFF WRITER

When two articles of impeachment against President Bill Clinton won a majority of the votes in the U.S. House, the event pleased some Oakland County residents. But others saw the move as extreme.

"Basically, I'm sick of the whole thing. I'm tired of listening to it and I want them to move on," said Marilyn Boyle of Orion Township. "I believe he lied, and he shouldn't have done that. But they, the Republicans, made the whole family-values and moral-issues an obsession."

The impeachment articles passed accuse President Clinton of lying under oath in front of a Federal grand jury and obstruction of justice. Unless a censure deal of some kind is struck, Clinton will go on trial before the U.S. Senate in January.

Boyle feels that at this point in time censure would be better than Clinton leaving office because she doesn't see "Al Gore doing a good job."

"And really, with what they had on the President, they've probably made a mountain out of mole hill," she said.

Susan Keyes of Troy has a much harsher view of the events that have transpired.

"I think he should have been tossed in jail for lying under oath," Keyes said. "There's no reason he should be exempt from the law. There are lots of people who are in jail for perjury so they should do something to him right now or let all of the other people out."

Speaking of getting "people out," Keith Kaminski has a swift solution to the whole Clinton affair.

"He needs to be removed — and removed quickly," said Kaminski, a Southfield resident.

Noting that House Speaker Designate Robert Livingston resigned in view of his indiscretions, Kaminski feels, "Clinton should be man enough to leave office, too."

Noting that Clinton is someone who is "very popular with the people," Kaminski is impressed by the fact that House members ignored public pressure and acted on the facts.

"I'm proud of the people who voted to impeach him," Kaminski said. "He lied, so they had to act on it."

"And there should be any deals cut now, the Constitution says there has to

be a trial," he said. "And I know people are afraid it's going to halt our economy or cause problems in the Senate, but the Constitution has weathered a lot of storms. It can weather this too."

Offered Maria Mark, of Clarkston, "I don't think he should be taken out of office for this. I think we need to find a better focus and worry about our own lives."

Mark feels too many people are standing in judgment of Clinton and the issue has been dragged out for way too long. "Is he the only one that's ever done this?" Marks asked. "People need to look at their own dirty laundry."

Kaminski strongly disagrees and in fact believes that "the voting public" have spoken through their representatives, and they want Clinton out.

"I think the House did the right thing. I wrote a letter to (Congressman Joe) Knollenberg and told him I supported

what he was doing," said James Kalajian of Birmingham. "If we take a normal person in a position of leadership and responsibility and this situation comes up we wouldn't even be talking about it anymore, he'd be long gone."

Having a superior involved with a subordinate is bad enough but add clear evidence of perjury and obstruction of justice and now the situation is criminal, Kalajian said.

"I hold someone in his position to a higher level of conduct than the normal citizen," Kalajian said. "This whole thing is embarrassing for our country in general."

The President's decision to attack Iraq in the hours before the House hearings began infuriates Kalajian even more.

"My gut feeling is that the Iraq bombing was completely contrived and something smelly is going to come out of that

in time," Kalajian said. "It was a last ditch effort to try and avoid the vote. To think people were dying for his hokery attempt to get out of the whole thing is disturbing in my mind. I don't know how he sleeps at night."

Richard Simonian of Bloomfield Township doesn't share those harsh descriptions of the President's actions.

"The legal scholars I've listened to on television, who are scholars of the U.S. constitution, say he has not committed an impeachable offense, so I'd be opposed to impeachment," Simonian said.

He feels Clinton will be prosecuted for perjury when he leaves office, and the matter can be dealt with at that time.

"What the House has already put him through is a form of punishment no matter what the Senate does now," Simonian said.

Great writers to be discussed at Lecture-Luncheon

Offering insight into the lives and accomplishments of the great masters of literature, scholar and performer Dr. Elliot Engel will present "The Brilliant and Bizarre Brontës" Tuesday, Jan. 12, at the Warren Chateau Hall, 6016 E. 10 Mile Road, Warren.

Open to the public, the talk will benefit the Oakland University Scholarship Committee as part of Macomb County's 1998-99 Macomb Town Hall

Lecture-Luncheon Series.

Published in the British and American press, Engel's articles have appeared in numerous magazines including Newsweek.

His mini-lecture series on Charles Dickens appeared on PBS television stations throughout the country. He is currently teaching at North Carolina State University.

The Lecture-Luncheon series helps support the committee's scholarship program at OU, which has awarded more than \$300,000 to deserving Macomb County students.

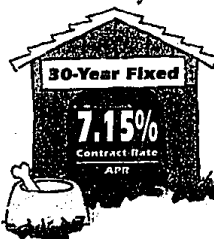
More than 25 percent of the university's population is from Macomb County. Lecture tickets can be purchased by calling (810) 751-6279 or (810) 573-6356.

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