

# Spreen takes aim at McDonald's county seat

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Stepping back into the political limelight was not a snap decision for former Oakland County Sheriff Johannes Spreen.

Although friends urged his return to politics as a candidate in the Oakland County Board of Commissioners' 27th district, Spreen says he hedged for awhile.

"I thought at first that I wouldn't run," said the 66-year-old Farmington Democrat. "But I do believe in county government is important and will become more important in the future."

Spreen's Republican opponent, six-term commissioner Jack McDonald of Farmington Hills, admitted his surprise at Spreen's decision to throw his hat into the political ring.

"Yes, I was surprised. I just assumed he had aspirations for a higher office. He ran for governor, county executive. To be one of 27 (commissioners) makes it difficult to do anything. I just didn't think it would be his cup of tea," McDonald said.

Despite McDonald's previous election success in the predominantly

Republican Farmington and Farmington Hills, he isn't taking Spreen's candidacy lightly. "He has great name recognition. Whether it's as equal in this area (as in other areas of the county), I don't know."

YET McDONALD, 46, plans no major changes in his campaign strategy. As he has done in the past, McDonald plans to "get out and talk with the people" — the same strategy Spreen intends to use.

Although McDonald said he doesn't want to second-guess Spreen's motive for running, he nonetheless acknowledged that as sheriff, Spreen was angry with commissioners, including himself.

In a telephone interview this week, Spreen admitted his anger for county commissioners, including McDonald, who, he said didn't follow through with support for special county crime units similar to the Alcohol Enforcement Team.

"That's one of the reasons I'm running," said Spreen, former Detroit police commissioner.

Crime, particularly the prevention of it, is one of Spreen's top issues in the campaign for a two-year seat on the commission. "I do believe in a



John McDonald  
Republican

more important role for the sheriff's department. I want to keep the county and neighborhoods from the fate of Detroit. It's tied to business growth. If business cannot work safely, they move," Spreen said.

IF ELECTED, Spreen said he hopes to improve coordinated efforts



Johannes Spreen  
Democrat

with local police agencies in combating crime and aiding traffic control. "There is no county assistance on crime and traffic."

Spreen's other interests include roads, solid waste, transportation and generating public interest in and knowledge of county issues.

"Ninety percent of the people do

not even know they have a county commission," said Spreen, who served on the New York City police force for 20 years before moving to Michigan.

To remedy the public's seeming lack of interest in and knowledge of county affairs, Spreen said he would schedule monthly meetings to inform area residents and to hear their opinions. "I would invite them up to see their county commission in action. There should be more citizens concerned about their county government."

McDonald divides the campaign's issues into two categories — style issues and real issues.

CRIME AND the urgency to "keep spending down" are two style issues, McDonald said. The real issues, however, involve roads, particularly the financing of needed improvements and whether Oakland County should take over control of district courts.

"The biggest thing will be funding (road improvements). There will have to be a change either in (existing) legislation or new legislation will have to be made," said McDonald, an attorney and former Oakland County assistant prosecutor.

Like Spreen, McDonald recognizes the public's lack of involvement in county government. "People are so busy making a living, raising kids. It's difficult for them to keep up with what's going on," McDonald said.

To keep area residents up-to-date with what's happening in the county, McDonald puts out a newsletter, generally dropping it off at residents' houses.

McDonald added that he feels he has a good working relationship with the city councils and city managers in Farmington and Farmington Hills. "There is no problem with communications there. They know I'm here."

## obituaries

### LEO F. FENDT

Mr. Fendt, 87, of Livonia died June 3.

Born in Farmington, Mr. Fendt was the founder of Fendt Book Supply and Fendt Transit Mfg. Farmington, in 1924. His family was among the community's centennial families. He was a lifetime member of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Survivors include his sons, Leo Jr. and Roger; brother, Harley Wolfrom; five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Services were June 6 at St. Paul Lutheran Church with the Rev. Winfred Koelpin officiating. Burial was in Glen Eden Cemetery, Livonia. Arrangements were made by the Harry J. Will Funeral Home, Livonia.

### RODERICK G. BARIL

Mr. Baril, 68, of West Bloomfield

died June 9.

Mr. Baril was the former owner of Master Mold and Die Inc. Survivors include his wife, Shirley; son, Ronald; a daughter, Kaye Wood; brother, Gordon; four grandchildren.

Services were June 13 at the McCabe Funeral Home, Farmington Hills. Burial was in Pine Lake Cemetery, West Bloomfield.

### ALMA A. MANNINEN

Mrs. Manninen, 79, of Taylor died June 10.

Mrs. Manninen was a homemaker. Survivors include her son, Charles Ahonen; daughters, Joyce Holappa and Betty Marudis; nine grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

Services were June 13 at the Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, Farmington, with the Rev. Elmer Liminat officiating. Burial was in Parkview Cemetery, Livonia.

### LELA M. DICKSON

Mrs. Dickson, 86, of Howell died June 11 in Livingston Care Center.

Born in Canada, Mrs. Dickson was a homemaker.

Survivors include her son, Gerald; a daughter, Betty Brooks; sister,

Reatha Melcher; seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Services were June 13 at the Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, Farmington, with the Rev. T. Richard Mores Sr. of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church officiating. Burial was in Grand Lawn Cemetery, Detroit.

## military news

Marline 1st Lt. Kevin Bowen will be a "Wingling" candidate in Beeville, Texas. He has been in jet fighter training since January 1985 and has been a Marine officer since December 1983. He is a 1979 North Farmington High School graduate and a 1979 graduate of Indiana Insti-

tute of Technology.

Air Force Airman 1st Class Stephen Reeves of Farmington has arrived for duty with the 8th Security Police Squadron, South Korea. He is a law enforcement specialist.

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