

Oakland party heads predict Clinton, Bush

By Wayne Peel
Staff writer

When it comes to politics, predictions are often wishes in disguise.

And when it comes to Michigan presidential politics, party wishes are often dashed.

But with Tuesday's primary fast approaching, leaders of Oakland's two major parties can't help but speculate a little.

President Bush will carry Michigan by a 60/35 margin over Patrick Buchanan, predicts Oakland GOP chairman James Alexander.

Bill Clinton should edge Paul Tsongas and a hard charging Jerry Brown on the Democratic side, at least according to that party's Oakland chief Donald Tucker.

Alexander, a Bush supporter, said he isn't taking conservative columnist Buchanan's presidential bid lightly.

"He's for real," Alexander said. "We obviously don't want him to get

any delegates out of Michigan." But Alexander's prediction would give Buchanan at least 24 state GOP delegates if it comes true.

HUSH WOULD pick up the balance of Michigan's 72 delegates, with 5 percent of the vote, but no delegates, for former Ku Klux Klan leader Duke.

Duke, in fact, is such an anathema for party regulars Alexander won't even mention him by name. He's "the guy with the same name as the basketball team," Alexander said, referring to Duke University's top rated Blue Demons.

Clinton and Tsongas would divide the lion's share of Michigan's 148 Democratic delegates — 40 percent for Arkansas Gov. Clinton, 35 former Massachusetts Sen. Tsongas — if Tucker's prediction came true. But Brown would pick up as much as 25 percent.

"The man is very smart, maybe the smartest person I've ever met,"

Tucker said of the former California governor. "But he might seem a little strange when you talk to him."

While Tucker would clearly be more comfortable supporting a ticket with Clinton or Tsongas at the top, he doesn't dismiss Brown's outsider's appeal.

"He put together some victories near the end of the 1976 campaign and he scared the daylight out of Jimmy Carter," Tucker said. "He's building his message slowly and he can't be discounted."

Both Tucker and Alexander were kind to the other party's candidates during their joint appearance Tuesday before Southfield-Lathrup Optimist Club members, despite a pointed question or two from the audience.

But the gloves came off when the discussion turned to county politics and L. Brooks Patterson's widely rumored bid for county executive.

"HE'S A media darling today, but let's not forget he was anti-busing activist" Irene McCabe's attorney in the 1970s," Tucker said.

Countered Alexander: "Patterson has 90 percent name recognition, and it's all good."

As for presidential politics, an upset win by Brown, Buchanan or even Duke — while unlikely — wouldn't be out of character. George Wallace's 1972 Democratic primary victory was followed by Jesse Jackson's 1988 win in party caucuses.

In their own way, however, each of the three remaining Democrats are equally unlikely contenders, at least in a state with still-heavy union clout.

"He's a conservative, but he's a constructive conservative," Tucker said of current front-runner Clinton.

Tsongas, meanwhile, has neither courted nor received union support.

The best thing about both, Tucker said, was that they lay to rest the ghost of FDR.

"These are new Democrats, for new times," he said.

In that vein, club president Steven Cooper might have asked the morning's best question.

"Say, which one of you is the Democrat and which one is the Republican?" the Southfield District Court judge said.

County Probate Court shares program advice

The Oakland County Probate Court has been called upon to provide consultation to an Ohio juvenile court.

Judge James S. Rapp of the Hardin County Probate Court, Ohio, met with Probate Court judges, staff, and volunteers to discuss how to develop and implement volunteer programs aimed at the prevention of juvenile delinquency and child neglect.

"We are honored that our program is a nationally recognized system of helping young people," Chief Probate Judge Barry Grant said.

"Oakland County Probate Court has one of the premier volunteer programs in the country," said Jerry Dash, executive director of Volunteers in Prevention Probations and Prisons. "You will go back with all the tools you will need to begin a volunteer program in your county."

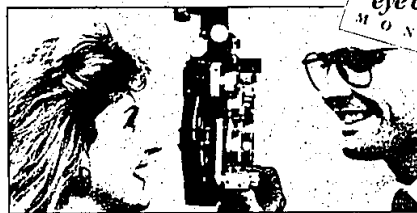
Dash is a national consultant on the development of court volunteer programs and often asks the Oakland County Probate Court to share information on its Youth Assistance Program so others can learn and adapt the model to their local need.

Each year the Oakland County Youth Assistance Program is asked to share its 38 years of expertise and knowledge about "volunteer involvement" with courts from across the United States and Canada, according to Grant.

People come from various locations to see the program at work. This past year, judges and staff met with representatives from the Correctional Service of Canada, Dekalb County, Georgia, and Antem County, Michigan. They have sent program information to Hawaii, Louisiana, Alabama, Arkansas, New Jersey and Tennessee.

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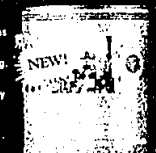
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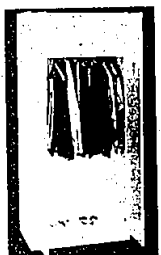
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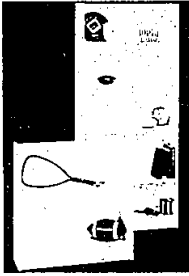
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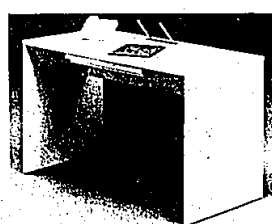


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