

POINTS OF VIEW

11th District: Wrong moves produce an upset

David Honigman appeared to have a clear path to Washington — three terms in the state House, one term in the state Senate — the same path that Bill Broomfield took some 36 years ago.

Honigman had a history of successful legislation and responsiveness to his constituency. His major blemish — a muddled position on the issue of abortion and an underground campaign among traditional Oakland County Republicans: "Anyone but Honigman."

Alice Gilbert always had an uphill battle for the coveted 11th U.S. House District.

But the former judge might have made it to the top — in this year of the successful woman candidate — had she run a campaign based on her own solid credentials, rather than on underlining Honigman's.

Tuesday, in what is described as a major upset, Republican voters from Birmingham to Livonia denied Gilbert's bid to go from the bench to Con-

gress as it did Honigman's to go from Lansing to Washington.

Their choice is Joe Knollenberg, a pro-life conservative who had never been elected to office and who spent much less money on his campaign than either Honigman or Gilbert.

Some say the pro-lifers got out the vote and ganged up on both of them. Joe Knollenberg says he ran a grass roots campaign, buoyed by nearly 1,000 volunteers.

Perhaps the experts, including the media, failed to give Bill Broomfield his due. Broomfield was old hat, resigning after Honigman announced his candidacy. Many thought he didn't have the stomach for a hard-fought race, after 26 years in Congress.

So he handpicked a clone, Knollenberg, to succeed him, younger, also a gentleman, and with the same conservative views that Broomfield holds.

In the end, the two monied candidates beat up on each other, and Knollenberg captured the prize — the



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chance to carry the GOP banner in a largely Republican district into the November election against Democrat Walter Briggs.

Gilbert said she had to attack first — she calls it bringing up the issues — because Honigman was waiting in the wings with a dirty campaign of his own. But in the end, they both went down in a sea of mudslinging.

What she should have concentrated on, drumming home and home and home again, were her pro-choice stand

on abortion, her background of public service and her solid grasp of issues. But by the time her campaign got to that, her message had gotten stuck in the mud.

As the first female to be elected a judge on the Oakland County Circuit Court, she paved the way for the three current female judges. And Gov. John Engler's recent appointment of another woman, Denise Langford-Morris, to fill out Gilbert's term was certainly a tribute to Gilbert's role. In addition Langford-Morris becomes the first black member of the court.

Honigman attended to the issues, but then delivered some blasts of his own. He sent low blows out in the areas of Gilbert's courtroom attendance record and mudslinging tactics. His last hours public apologies didn't temper the facts.

And Honigman made the references by both Knollenberg and Gilbert to his "buying the office" appear to come true.

Honigman overdid it. The radio and TV ads started way back — before Gilbert had even declared. Too much literature was sent out. Pamphlet after pamphlet arrived in the mail. Telephone squads made duplicate calls to the same people.

Knollenberg landed his blows, too — on the issues of campaign spending and career politicians, but in a more civil fashion.

Knollenberg is a conservative. He is pro-life and admittedly "a hawk." Briggs is pro-choice and a Democrat who learned his political philosophy at the knee of his uncle, Phil Hart.

Although both can be expected to fight hard, their differences on the issues are already apparent. Out of the mud emerges the fact that the voters of the 11th Congressional District will have crystal clear choices in November.

Judith Doner Berne is assistant managing editor for the Oakland County editions of the Observer & Eccentric.

Shrub lures birds with his campaign fight song

When the Parrot withdrew from the contest, he had never officially entered. The Shrub heaved a sigh of relief. Turning to his better half, he gloated. "With the Parrot gone, Mrs. Shrub, it will be a cake walk to a second term; especially if we can make the Pastry man quit his globe trotting and get him back here to finish up our campaign. The Pastry man can go on the attack against Billy the Weasel, and I'll come out smelling like a rosebush."

"Now Babs, what I think you can do to help out," the incumbent Shrub continued, "is to get involved more. Every poll they take shows that the public out there thinks more of you than they do me." The top Shrub continued self pityingly. "We need to capitalize on that. If we let the sheep, I mean people, see your grandmotherly side, well golly, they'll just have to believe the country is in good hands with the Shrubs at the helm."

President Shrub beamed as a sudden idea occurred to him. "I know," he chortled gleefully, "while I'm working to convince the Pastry man, I want you

to get together with Pretty Boy Byrd and his wife, Marc. The three of you figure out a way to divert media attention from the fact that our campaign isn't going anywhere."

The head Shrub walked over to his desk. "They said I don't have the vision thing," he thought. "They said I couldn't lead. I just need more time." He knew what to do. Find the Pastry Man and pray that Mrs. Shrub and the Byrds come up with something. He picked up the phone and his thoughts turned to Billy Weasel. No way could a weasel beat a Shrub, he vowed. He would find a way to get the Parrot's followers. This Shrub would not be clipped.

Meanwhile, Billy Weasel was on a roll. Riding through mid-America in his customized bus. Billy couldn't believe his luck. He didn't know how, but he had survived; beaten all the contenders; beaten his past. Billy marveled at his good fortune as he gazed out the glass. He breathed deep of the fragrant country air coming through the open window but was careful not to inhale.



JEFFREY MILLER

Grimacing to himself, he stood and opened the overhead compartment. Billy reached in and took out a long rectangular case covered in a slickly packaged snakeskin. As he sprang the locks of the case, he looked up, knowing that every eye in the bus was on him, and gave a sly grin. Turning to the wife of his newly appointed running mate, the Weasel said, "Lipper Boar, Honey, I'm gonna play you the song that I plan to perform right after they swear me in. My wife, Liberally, thinks it's a perfect match for our campaign."

Billy pulled out his flute and put the mouthpiece to his thin lips. He glanced

out the rear window with satisfaction to see a caravan of over 200 media types following his lead, hanging on and reporting his every byte. He felt a deep sense of pride as the first notes began, unaware that they were being picked up by tiny transmitters hidden throughout the bus by the Parrot's people.

The Parrot sat still and alone in a tree top bunker. He was an incredibly multi-colored and fast-talking specimen with a small wingspan but a huge appetite. The Parrot squawked loudly as Billy's first note blared through the receiver mistakenly left on high. Startled, the Parrot lost his balance, and tumbled backward from his perch as the opening bars of "Fools Rush In" reverberated through his bunker. The Parrot, humiliated that he had lost his balance, forgot to open his wings. He was saved from severe injury only by the diversion being cooked up by Mrs. Shrub, Pretty Boy Byrd and his wife, Marc.

They busted into the main Shrub's office just as he was hanging up the phone. "The Pastry Man is afraid to

commit. He thinks we might lose with or without him. He said he wants to run for President in '96 and doesn't want to be tainted." The Shrub peered closely at his second in command and sneered. "The Pastry Man thinks I should dump you, Byrd, he thinks getting away from you could spell relief."

Byrd just stood there, looking like a sparrow to a hawk. Before he could say anything, Mrs. Shrub broke in and said excitedly, "Wait, George, we have it. I'll challenge Liberally to a cookie bake-off. But, George, you need a challenge you can win, too. You can't whip the recession, you can't whip drugs or unemployment or education. Think, George, who can you whip?"

The Top Shrub grinned as the answer came to him, a happy smile spread over his face as he yelled, "SADDAM."

Jeffrey Miller, a Southfield resident, is executive producer/host of "Transition," seen locally at 8:30 a.m. Saturdays on WXON-TV.

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