

# County circuit court race could set spending record

The campaign to become the next new Oakland County circuit judge is linked to the race for campaign dollars.

That race had its origin in the waning hours of the Aug. 4 election — as totals showed Colleen O'Brien and Steve Kaplan would advance from the Aug. 6 primary to the general election.

O'Brien and Kaplan finished first and second, respectively, in a tight, three-way campaign with Richard D. Kuhn Jr. in the nonpartisan race.

O'Brien garnered 49,199 votes compared with 46,282 for Kaplan and 42,875 for Kuhn. The percentage totals were 35.6 for O'Brien, 33.5 for Kaplan and 31 for Kuhn.

With the race down to two people, the candidates say they are already in a tight race — for money as well as votes.

In separate interviews last week O'Brien and Kaplan seemed intentionally vague. Neither wanted to get too specific about future expenses, apparently because doing so might hint at his or her respective strategy.

Each, for example, expects to spend a "minimum" of \$50,000 in a campaign in which name identification will be vital. Each expects targeted mailings and, quite possibly, expensive media spots.

## Name game

"In many ways, it's a name game," said Kaplan. "Many voters don't know much about the candidates, so my goal is to get my name — and qualifications — out there."

O'Brien said it's important to spend smart. "I got the most votes — while spending the least — because I targeted absentee

voters," she said. He campaign will do the same going into the general election, she said.

Ironically, each candidate has each scheduled a \$100 per person fund-raiser on Sept. 17. O'Brien's will be at the Fox and Hounds in Bloomfield Hills, Kaplan's at Colangelo's Restaurant in Pontiac. Each plans additional fund-raisers, with details pending.

"I'll spend every cent I can raise," said Kaplan.

Oakland Circuit Judge Wendy Potts is watching the O'Brien-Kaplan contest with more than a casual interest. Potts is chair of the Judiciary Committee for the State Bar of Michigan, that is focusing on financing judicial races.

## Spending concern

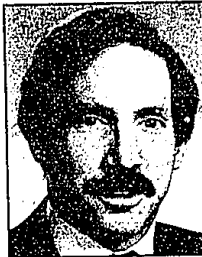
"This is an ongoing concern of the state bar," Potts said Friday. "We're not focusing on this particular race. But financing judicial races is a serious concern."

Potts said judging from the primary race between O'Brien, Kaplan and Kuhn, the contest to become the newest circuit judge on the Oakland bench is more likely to be decided by hard work and grass roots organization than big bucks.

"Both candidates have good names and credentials," said the judge. It always costs money to run a good campaign, she said, but the outcome will likely be determined by efficiency.

The primary was not particularly expensive, according to preliminary campaign finance reports filed July 24. Pre-primary reports are due Sept. 3.

But the Aug. 4 election was a primary in which considerations



Steven Kaplan



Colleen O'Brien

other than money may have been of primary importance. The top vote-getter, for example, raised and spent the least amount of money, according to the reports.

O'Brien, a Rochester Hills resident who practices law with the firm of Cummings, McClure, Davis & Aho in Pontiac, raised \$22,665 and spent \$16,559.

Kaplan, a West Bloomfield resident who is an assistant prosecutor in Macomb County, had contributions totaling \$52,744 and expenses of \$33,170.

Kuhn, a Waterford resident who practices with the Addison Need Law firm in Bloomfield Hills, raised \$42,240 and spent \$31,951.

## Primary figures

Most of the contributors made donations of \$100 or less. But the reports for each candidate listed exceptions. For example:

■ O'Brien's finance statement listed her largest single contributor as Bloomfield Hills attorney

Steven Moffett, who gave \$2,500. Moffett is a close friend of O'Brien's husband and campaign advisor Tom Cory. She had a \$1,000 contribution from Maleah Montey of Clinton Township and a \$500 contribution from her sister-in-law and campaign treasurer Debra L. O'Brien of Shelby Township.

■ Kaplan received \$1,000 contributions from the Dickinson Wright law firm in Bloomfield Hills and attorney James H. Finney of Clinton Township. He received \$500 contributions from attorney Samuel I. Bornstein of Farmington Hills, the executive committee of the 11th Congressional District and Ms. Nina Bufalino of Grosse Pointe Woods.

■ Kuhn listed contributions of \$1,550 from his law firm and \$1,000 from the Dickinson Wright law firm. He also listed \$500 contributions from Samuel Bornstein, his father, Circuit Judge Richard D. Kuhn, and his mother Sally Kuhn.

# Oakland officials awaiting word on out-of-state drug suspects

California authorities are waiting to hear from Gov. Engler's office before extraditing a brother and sister to Michigan to face drug charges that carry a maximum penalty of life in prison.

"We've completed the process at this end," Orange County deputy district attorney Steve Bickel said Friday. "We just need to get the warrant from the governor's office in Michigan."

Bickel was referring to the extradition of a 38-year-old California woman and her 33-year-old brother, both implicated in the mailing of almost 19 pounds of cocaine (eight kilos) to a Holiday Inn hotel in Southfield last December.

Both are being held without bond in California and are fighting extradition. Both are key figures in what is believed to be the biggest cocaine case in recent Oakland County history. Both are charged with conspiracy to deliver more than 650 grams of cocaine which carries a mandatory penalty of life in prison.

A third defendant in the case, Deangelo D. Henderson, 26, of Detroit, appeared in Southfield District Court Thursday for preliminary examination on charges of possessing and conspiring to possess more than 650 grams of cocaine with intent to deliver. Each charge carries a mandatory penalty of life in prison.

The exam started relatively late Thursday and lasted less than two hours, according to

Oakland County assistant prosecutor Beth Hand. It is scheduled to continue on Monday.

When contacted about the case, Henderson's attorney, Cornelius Pitts of Detroit, declined to comment.

Hand, however, said the case against all three defendants is based on the work of the Orange County Sheriff's Department working in conjunction with federal drug agents.

One agent became suspicious, Hand said, when a woman — who police believe was the 38-year-old suspect — used a \$100 bill, rather than a credit card or bills of smaller denomination, to mail a package at the Airborne Express office in Irvine, California to Southfield. Subsequent investigation led police to Southfield, said the prosecutor.

Police arrested Henderson in Michigan, Hand said. The California residents were arrested last month, she said.

All three defendants are charged under Michigan's drug-lifer law that mandates life in prison for anyone convicted of trafficking in 650 or more grams of cocaine or heroin.

Parole is not possible under the present law, passed in 1978. But a bill to amend the law — allowing parole in some cases after 20 years — was passed last month and sent to the governor for his signature.

"It's still a tough law," said Oakland County Prosecutor David Goreyca, "even with possible parole after 20 years."

## OAKLAND DIGEST

Oakland Digest provides a summary of headline stories from around the county during the week leading up to Aug. 12.

**BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP**  
Late movie: Plans for a 20-screen Showcase Cinema complex on Telegraph Road apparently have been delayed. Township officials said they haven't heard from National Amusements, parent company for the theater chain, for several

months. Officials has told the theater company its initial plans didn't meet the community's upscale image.

**FARMINGTON HILLS**  
Wet and angry: Fed up over wet basements, Farmington Hills residents flooded city hall with complaints after heavy Aug. 6 and Aug. 9 rainstorms. Some residents asked the city to declare a moratorium on all new

construction until sewer problems are fixed.

**ROCHESTER HILLS**  
Happy trails: The Paint Creek Trailways Commission and city agree improvements need to be made to the trail's Tienken Road crossing, but while the trailways commission said improvements should be in place by 2001, city officials said they could come even sooner depending upon nearby development.

**SOUTHFIELD**  
Charter question: City council president Sidney Lantz is at odds with the Oakland County Political Action Committee over whether the city charter should be revised. Lantz said no revisions are necessary, but OCPAC said the 40-year-old document may need some revision.

**TROY**  
Community center: Troy officials could this week get their first

look at the city's proposed community center. The center is expected to be housed in a wing of the old Troy High School building on Livernois near Big Beaver. The building unused wing will be torn down.

**WEST BLOOMFIELD**  
Switching sides: Debbie Schlus-

sel and Ron Wolf, both defeated in the Republican primary for the 39th District state House seat have crossed party lines and endorsed Democrat Maxine Bricker for the November general election. Schlusel and Wolf were among five Republicans who lost the primary to Marc Shulman.

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**Correction Notice**

In our August 16th ad, we advertised a Memorax CD-RW 10-pack (model 4772-1100) for 99 cents after a "14.99 mail-in rebate."

The product advertised is actually a Dyan CD-R 10-pack (model 4772-1100) correctly shown in the photo.

We apologize for any confusion or inconvenience this may have caused.

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