

OUR VIEWS

47th court: Leib, Brady, Brickner

In the primary race for 47th District Court judge, we're recommending Magistrate Jim Brady, Farmington Hills councilman Barry Brickner and attorney Larry Leib.

Brady's qualifications and experience place him squarely in line for this post. As a magistrate, he is already familiar with the 47th District's facility, its communities and its citizens. He carries with him a historical understanding of the system, but also advocates progressive procedures like video arraignments.

We like Brickner's ideas about streamlining the docket by making greater use of computers. Other candidates also suggested allowing electronic payment of fines and document filing. But he takes the concept a step further, suggesting judges key in certain data themselves.

Finally, Leib gets our vote despite his relative youth. The 34-year-old new father may not be as experienced as some candidates, but his temperament and common sense approach make him a good fit. He advocates holding court early in the morning or in the evening, making access easier for citizens, alternative work programs and putting domestic violence offenders on an electronic tether to protect their victims.

Retiring Judge Fred Harris leaves behind a very large pair of shoes in the 47th District Court. We believe Jim Brady, Barry Brickner and Larry Leib have the best chance of filling them.

House Republican primary: Knol

All three candidates in the Republican primary for the House District 37 seat have ties to our communities and have made it a better place to live.

Valerie Knol, though relatively new to the communities by comparison, seems to us best prepared to move on to the next level of competition in November.

Knol clearly demonstrated a solid understanding not only of the problems facing state government, but of the kinds of ideas that could go a long way toward resolving them. We were particularly impressed with her ideas about education, offering tax credits to people who volunteer in schools and the promotion of additional charter schools. Knol is opposed to vouchers, supports Proposal A and favors incentives, rather than restrictions to curb urban sprawl.

Most importantly, however, she presented herself to us as an articulate and enthusiastic candidate, able to clearly present her positions on a wide variety of issues. She is bright and energetic, unafraid to take a firm stand and came prepared with specific proposals for change.

On Aug. 6, we recommend we vote in the Republican primary cast a ballot for Valerie Knol.

House Democratic primary: Vagnozzi

When it comes to our endorsement for the Democratic candidate in the Aug. 6 House District 37 primary, we urge voters to support Aldo Vagnozzi.

When it comes to local politics, local government, social issues and community involvement, his record is simply unbeatable.

He has served on both the Farmington School Board and Farmington City Council, including two terms as Mayor. He's actively involved with the Michigan Campaign for Quality Care, which works on behalf of folks in long-term care facilities, in the Multicultural/Multiracial Community Council, the AARP and the city's Consumer Protection Committee, which he chairs.

He rightly calls our state's mental health system "one of the worst in the country" and advocates a move away from million dollar tax incentives to large corporations and toward funding programs that will benefit the state's most vulnerable residents.

He'd like to see more done to help seniors stay in their homes as long as possible, whether that means increasing the property tax exemption (which hasn't been re-examined in more than 20 years) or expanding the kinds of programs that keep seniors active and involved in their communities.

But Vagnozzi's most important attribute, in our estimation, is his staunch support of local control. Government works best when it's closest to the people.

Aldo Vagnozzi knows that. And that's the message he'll carry to Lansing. We urge voters to give him a chance to do that on August 6.



"A bunch of the boys were whooping it up at the Malamute Saloon" (Apologies to Robert W. Service.) The furry and curious clientele of 4 Legged Friends Day Care gather at a door to meet and greet whoever might be coming to visit. The pooches spend their days with their friends: playing, snoozing, eating. Exactly what we humans do on our own vacations.

LETTERS

Experience is not competence

I'm sad to see that Magistrate Jim Brady is running for 47th District Court judge. And I'm sad to see the Observer has endorsed his candidacy. Some people think his long tenure and experience make him suitable for the job. But I'm here to tell you that experience does not equal competence.

I went up before him once to contest a ticket for turning left on a yellow light. I was shocked by what he did.

He spontaneously thought up new driving laws that I was supposed to know beforehand.

He dreamt up whatever laws it took to justify the ticket. It looks to me like no one has a chance when they go before him. It seems he'll always back the police.

Anyone driving in Farmington needs to remotely read his mind ahead of time to know what extra laws he is imposing on people. That's bad news for drivers, since we all know Farmington police are ticket crazy.

If Brady becomes a judge, he will be able to administer injustice on a higher level. He doesn't deserve to have any role in the judicial system. Whatever you do, DON'T vote for Jim Brady for 47th District Court Judge in the August primary.

Roger F. Hano
Detroit

Patterson doesn't endorse

You have a very spirited political race to the fill the vacancy in the 37th District House of Representatives' seat. My name has been linked with the candidacy of John Akouri but I wish to make it known that as Chairman of the Oakland County Republican Party, I cannot and have not endorsed anyone in the upcoming August primary.

You are fortunate to have several good Republican candidates in the race, not least among them Terry Sever, Valerie Knol and John Akouri.

When the dust settles after the primary, I look forward to working with the Republican nominee from the 37th District to ensure a Republican victory this fall.

L. Brooks Patterson
Chairman, OCRP

Knollenberg has not endorsed

In response to numerous calls and inquiries, please allow me to set the record straight with respect to Congressman Joe Knollenberg's position in the race for the State House of Representative in the 37th District.

Congressman Knollenberg has not endorsed - repeat, not endorsed - any candidates in this important contest.

Despite the clear attempt on the part of one candidate to create the impression that he has the backing of Congressman Knollenberg this is not the case and it is important the voters of Farmington and Farmington Hills not be deceived.

Congressman Knollenberg is well acquainted with all the candidates seeking the Republican nomination in the 37th District. He strongly encourages

voters to look at the ideas and platforms of all the candidates and make an informed decision. One important piece of information is that he has not endorsed any of the candidates. Any effort to make voters think otherwise is less than straightforward.

Robert G. Wyatt
Political Director
Knollenberg for Congress

Police back Knol, Brady

During its April business meeting, the Farmington Hills Police Officers Association voted to endorse Valerie Knol for the 37th District State Representative and Magistrate James Brady for the 47th District Judge.

Although both positions offer several good choices, we feel that our endorsed candidates will prove to be the best for the future of Farmington Hills.

Valerie Knol's commitment to the community, her business background and her enthusiasm will make her a strong voice in Lansing.

The Oakland County Bar Association Public Advisory Committee recently rated Magistrate Brady's qualification "outstanding," and we agree.

The PHPOA encourages all eligible residents to vote Aug. 6 and ask that you support our endorsed candidates.

Wayne Beerbower, President
Farmington Hills Police Officers Association

Backs Brady

I am endorsing Magistrate Jim Brady for the next 47th District Court Judge of Farmington/Farmington Hills.

I have come to know Jim through our children playing on the same baseball teams and dancing together on the same dance competition teams, and I have found Jim to be a very honest and hard-working person, as well as a dedicated family man.

Before I ever knew Jim, my father, Judge Michael Hand, became closely acquainted with him.

My dad served on the bench in Farmington/Hills for 25 years and had the privilege of working with Jim Brady after Jim was appointed Magistrate in 1986, a position which he has held for the last 16 years. I know that my father respected Jim for his intelligence, his organization, and his fairness in dealing with court cases.

I wish my father were alive today to write an endorsement for Jim that would be far more eloquent than mine. Jim Brady has the judicial experience, the intelligence, and the commitment to our community that make him the best choice for the next Judge of the 47th District Court.

Mary K. Landsberg
Farmington Hills

Letter falls short

Andrew J. Halli's letter in your July 25th edition falls far short in rationalizing the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce Candidate Evaluation process, which found Aldo Vagnozzi and Gilda Jacobs unqualified because they were not pro-business. One need only review the current

pro-business climate of the Republican government in Washington to shudder at what the Chamber must have in mind for Farmington and Farmington Hills.

As Mr. Halli states, "Aldo Vagnozzi and Gilda Jacobs...were given their ratings only as it pertains specifically to their business friendliness."

Is that all there is? Millions of Americans have seen their pension funds and retirement savings disappear in the pro-business morass of Enron, Haverton, Arthur Anderson, Halliburton, Adelphia, World Com and all the other corporate meltdowns. I am certain those folks would prefer politicians and businessmen who look at more than stock options and consulting contracts.

The Chamber - and all of us - ought to look at the complete candidate, not just characteristics which fit our personal prejudices and individual needs.

Dan Greenberg
Farmington Hills

Raczkowski fair, tough

Farmington and Farmington Hills deserve the very best for 47th District Court Judge. Annette Raczkowski stands out as the best candidate both for being tough on crime and bringing fairness to the court and the people.

Raczkowski is well qualified to serve as District Judge. Also, a recent article in the Farmington Observer correctly noted her desire to bring fairness to the courts.

Her ability to bring fairness and efficiency to the courts is demonstrated by her willingness to listen, her approachability, and her strong work ethic. A candidate like Raczkowski that is willing to spend months visiting to voters door to door will serve as judge with the same level of dedication and drive.

Raczkowski will be tough on crime. It is clear that she has the positive attitude and work ethic to cooperate effectively with both law enforcement and the community to make our community an even better place to live and raise our families.

Vote August 6th for Annette Raczkowski for 47th District Court Judge.

Richard DeVries
Farmington Hills

SHARE YOUR OPINIONS

We welcome your letters to the editor. Please include your name, address and phone number for verification. We ask that your letters be 400 words or less. We may edit for clarity, space and content.

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QUOTABLE

It is not the responsibility of local government to persuade our citizens to vote against ballot proposals that the Governor doesn't like. Rather it is his responsibility to educate the voters on his perspective of the impact the ballot proposals would have on the budget.

Farmington Hills Mayor Nancy Bates

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