

GOP upset surprises legislators

O & E Roundup

The price of gas and the warmth of a handshake were cited by area legislators in Grand Rapids Democrat Richard VanderVeen's upset win in the race for Vice President Gerald Ford's old seat in Congress.

The traditionally Republican seat from Michigan's 5th District fell into Democratic hands for the first time in 64 years when VanderVeen defeated State Sen. Robert VanderLaan (R-Kentwood).

"In all honesty we were surprised," said State Sen. Carl Pursell (R-Plymouth). Pursell, whose district includes Livonia and Redford Township, said that although VanderLaan, the GOP candidate, was well known to voters, some of his colleagues in the State Senate had doubts about his ability to keep Grand Rapids voters in the Republican camp. "Bob's not a warm personality kind of guy," Pursell said.

State Senator Daniel Cooper (D-Oak Park) blamed VanderLaan's defeat on a more partisan factor. "The Republi-

can candidate didn't want to face the issues," Cooper said.

Cooper shared Pursell's surprise at the size of the Democratic victory. "It's the first election I've seen where the total Republican vote in the primary was more than VanderLaan got in the general election," he said.

None of the legislators singled out Watergate as the chief cause of the Democratic victory. "It wasn't as big a factor as everyone is claiming it to be," Cooper said. He suggested that Watergate was "part of a wide spectrum of concerns" which disturbed the American people. "Richard Nixon is one of the problems," he said.

Like other Democrats, State Rep. John Markes (D-Westland), who represents part of Livonia, remained cautious about Democratic chances in November. Any Democrat who relaxes because of Watergate "may be in for a hell of a surprise," he warned.

Pursell blamed the GOP loss on

several factors. "Watergate was not the basic issue," he said. "I'm more concerned about the economic issues, and I think that's what happened in Grand Rapids." He cited the energy crisis and the cost of food and gas as basic causes of voter dissatisfaction.

State Rep. Ray Smit (R-Ann Arbor) said VanderVeen's win "certainly showed that the mess in Washington is going to have a very profound effect this year." He hopes the Watergate issue had more impact in Grand Rapids than it will at the polls in November, because this contest was a special election which isolated the issue.

"There is a feeling among voters to 'throw the rascals out,'" said State Sen. William Faust (D-Westland), whose district includes Garden City and Canton Township.

Rep. John Bennett (D-Redford) agreed. "I think this is a backlash against the national administration and President Nixon caused by what's going on in Washington," he said.

"It's unfortunate that the fallout is going to affect other politicians in the November election." Congressman William Ford (D-Taylor), who represents Garden City, Westland, and Canton Township, said: "The Grand Rapids election is definitely a referendum on President Nixon," he said. "Republican politicians should take a good look at their positions."

Congressman Marvin Esch (R-Ann Arbor), whose district includes Plymouth and Livonia, called VanderVeen's victory "interesting." Citing voter apathy and an inadequate GOP effort, he said, "I'm not really trying to be evasive; it's just difficult to generalize from any one election." State Rep. R. Robert Geake

(R-Northville), whose district includes part of Livonia, attributed the Democratic win to VanderVeen's "very clever" campaign tactics. "He capitalized on Ford's popularity and Nixon's unpopularity by running on the premise that Nixon should resign so Ford would be president," Geake said.

State Rep. William Keith (D-Garden City), whose district includes a small portion of Westland, said that people are looking for more credibility in political leaders and that all incumbents could be affected. Cooper suggested that voters will judge politicians individually. He said that the Grand Rapids election "points to the fact that there is an excellent chance of a Democratic sweep in November."

Jarvis and McMillan named Eagle Scouts

Two Farmington Scouts, Craig Jarvis and Gerald E. (Jay) McMillan, have attained the honored rank of Eagle Scout.

Craig, 14, followed a family tradition in attaining the Eagle rank. Both his father and brother achieved it before him.

A member of Troop 157, Craig attends Warner Junior High School. He began as a Cub Scout.

Jay, 16, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Jerold O. McMillan of 32003 Valleyview and is in the 10th grade at Farmington High School. He became a Scout in February 1969.

For his Eagle project, Jay made wooden manipulative games for children with learning disabilities in Farmington public schools and for patients at Children's Hospital. Jay is active in his high school band and at Redford Presbyterian Church where he earned the God and Country award besides the 21 merit badges required to attain Eagle rank.

Magen Davidwomen plan fund raiser

The Women's Committee of the Michigan Region of the American Red Magen David for Israel will hold its next fund-raiser on Saturday, April 27, called "Fun For Funds."

The event will take place in Beth Abraham-Hillel, on Maple Road, in West Bloomfield, with a schedule of games, a silent auction, dancing, food and a "super carney." The menu will consist of Coney Islands, fried chicken, corn on the cob, make-it-yourself sundaes and pie.

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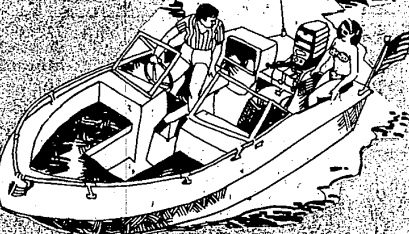

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