

**IN MY OPINION****Caroline Porter**

# Politics: behind the scenes

The campaigns of candidates running for statewide offices often tell us more than we ever wanted to know. In local politics, we don't hear many tidbits we ought to know.

State's Attorney Paul Mangieri must wonder if it pays to volunteer and provide leadership on county issues. For years, the 9th Judicial District put pressure on the county board because of inadequate county jail facilities. Mangieri helped pass a referendum and serves as chair of the committee to oversee the building of the new jail facility. This was not part of his duties as States Attorney, he was just interested in helping achieve a necessary goal for the county.

Now his opponent in the race for State Senate is trying to trash his reputation because of issues arising from the building of the jail facility and the headlines and quotes on his flyer are simply not true. They aren't even taken out of context, because most of them weren't written or said by anyone. It's amazing what people will do in a political campaign when they are desperate. And we wonder why ordinary citizens aren't interested in politics or leadership roles in government.

The office of Regional Superintendent of Schools is one of the few elective offices which requires certain educational and administrative certifications for a candidate to even file petitions. It's important to note that Democrat candidate Bonnie Harris has achieved those, while Republican Tim Halloran is "grandfathered" as a candidate because he is Assistant Regional Superintendent of Schools. He has not been in the classroom for over nine years. Last year, one Democrat hopeful (not Harris) was considering running for the position and spoke to Halloran about her aspirations. He

replied, "This is a position usually held by a Republican." Oh, really.

How refreshing it would be to have a woman — a beloved teacher now and for thirty years and a leader in our community — bring new direction and ideas to that office.

Republican candidate Halloran's main claim to fame in our daily paper's review of qualifications were the accomplishments of his wife and children. Just for the record, the Harris' three daughters are an attorney, second year medical student and a gas journeyman for Illinois Power. Their son is in the United States Army.

Of course, the higher the office, the higher the stakes, and the battles really get dirty. The race for 3rd District Appellate Court Judge, where Galesburg attorney Dawn Conolly is the Democratic candidate, is getting nasty. She has the reputation for being tough and prepared in the courtroom. Every local attorney should be supporting her. Being used against her is an Illinois Bar Association poll of male attorneys who have never met the woman. The good-old-boy network is rearing its ugly head and Conolly's attributes of experience both as an attorney and social worker, respected community leader, honesty and integrity, are all of a sudden not enough to qualify her as a judge. Her opponent is an attorney who has spent most of his career defending corporations and insurance companies, not very good training for protecting the rights of individuals.

More tidbits next week.

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