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Democratic Club queries the candidates

By EDITH OCASEK
 Citrus-Hernando Times Correspondent

SPRING HILL — Pointed questions that brooked only straight answers highlighted a crowded agenda of a "Get Acquainted With Your Candidates" evening at a Democratic Club meeting Tuesday.

Among those invited to address the membership, Charles H. Edwards, running for state representative in the 36th District, outlined his ideas on the subject of collective bargaining and expressed his concern about the unemployment rate in Hernando County, where one of four persons is unemployed. Not only do the unemployed suffer, he stated, but those on fixed income cannot afford the escalating tax rate that has reached the highest legal limit with no additional tax revenue for roads, extra police and fire protection. "We are rated 44th in education," he said. "Our leadership is drifting in the wrong direction."

JoAnn Saunders, campaigning for a 5th District in the U.S. House said that after three years of campaigning she is well-informed about constituent problems. If elected, she said she plans to continue to keep in close touch with the people by use of her mobile office. She stated that she is the first congressional candidate to qualify by means of signatures from 11,000 registered voters. She offered a money-back guarantee to those who have helped put her into office if she fails to live up to her promise after election.

JAMES E. SURSELY, in the running for U.S. House of Representatives, spoke next. A triple amputee as a result of a tank explosion in the Vietnam war, Sursely is "wheeling his way across the 5th District" — inviting the public to walk along with him, and talk. He said he is concerned about inflation, unemployment and the problems of small businessmen. Pledges are being taken for any amount per mile on his cross-district trek and may be made by phoning (305) 645-5760, he said. Look for the red, white, and blue van, he said.

Sid Vihlen, also a District 5 congressional candidate, said the voters are fortunate in having so wide a choice in the congressional race. He urged that the voters unite their voting power and express their wishes in government. He said it is time to get tough with the oil-rich nations, and he reminded the audience that this country is technologically well in advance of any other country.

He spoke about the seven-county planning group. He indicated that, if elected, he would appoint a series of advisory committees to keep him informed about specific problems within the district. He cited as an example the formation of a senior citizen advisory committee, which would have a representative membership of senior citizens



Candidates who spoke included (from left, standing) Williams, Sursely, Trask, Blunting, Edwards; and (seated) JoAnn Saunders, Sursely, Culbreath. Vihlen left before the picture was taken.

to act as a viable committee to let him know the feeling of senior citizens on voting issues that he hopes to be voting on in Congress.

TOO MANY CONGRESSMEN have been elected and gone off to Washington forgetting the problems of the people who put them in office, he said. Win or lose, Vihlen said he plans to keep in touch with the people. Of the candidates questioned regarding the Humphrey-Hawkins bill, only Vihlen replied that this bill is not yet in its final form. He quoted Sen. Stone, saying that even Jimmy Carter had not taken a definite stand as yet. He said that he feels that the U.S. Government has played politics with the people and that the tax system needs modification.

Miller Newton, 5th Congressional District candidate, replying to a question about the auto industry, said American business should not be building American products in foreign countries. Regarding the Humphrey-Hawkins bill, he said he would vote for it but would read it carefully first. Now clerk of the Pasco Circuit Court, he was successfully re-elected with 83 per cent of the vote. He proposes to modify the Social Security laws to make it possible for retirees to work without loss of benefits.

Incumbent State Sen. Alan Trask stated that the real issue in his campaign is one of effective leadership. He said he feels that the American people should take care of themselves and only the physically disabled should be entitled to welfare.

RUNNING FOR STATE Senate in District 36, Bill Bunting was rueful about losing in the Spring Hill golf tournament last Sunday. He decried the lack of reading ability even in college level students and said it is time to get back to basics. He discussed crime and the need for better law enforcement with prosecution to the fullest extent of the law for criminals.

Incumbent State Rep. John R. Culbreath said he has been returned to Tallahassee five times. He said he is a senior representative and a member of the Finance and Tax Committee. He said \$2-million dollars has been appropriat-

ed for a new college on Stringer Hill in Brooksville. He said home rule has been passed back to the municipalities and local government. He stated that only 40 per cent of the money appropriated for the people finds its way to the people. He said he is sure that this nation is coming to national health care.

Chairman of the "Get Out and Vote Committee" he is eager for people with absentee ballot requirements to get in touch with Neil Kinnear, Hernando County supervisor of elections, for the proper advice on the subject before 5 p.m. Sept. 6 so that their vote will count. Culbreath stated that he has held his office with honesty and trust and would like to be re-elected.

Judge John C. "Jack" Williams, candidate for circuit judge, addressed the membership on the subject of nonpartisan judicial election. He reminded the audience to look at the ballot carefully Sept. 7, primary day, and make sure to note the nonpartisan side. He said that when he took office there was a backlog of 12,000 cases. He said he brought the calendar up to date. He said he is the only Judge with his background of judicial experience seeking office. He advocates a mandatory three-year sentence for criminals.

JOHN PORTER OF the Hernando County adult education system, spoke on behalf of lawyer Fred Karl, citing his integrity, freedom from bias and qualifications for the Florida Supreme Court.

Irving Sunkin, chairman of the primary day transportation committee, said people who need transportation to voting booths should phone 683-3257 or 683-2725 or 683-2611.

The next meeting of the West Hernando County Democratic Club will be at 7:30 P.M. Wednesday, Sept. 29. Guest speaker will be Greg Farmer of the Democratic Executive Board in Tallahassee. John Magner, Joseph Desmond and Marvin Hunt will address the membership regarding their candidacy for county commissioner. Dennell Lord will give his qualifications for the office of fire commissioner. Rev. Paul H. Clemons will speak on the subject of the School Board.

Pg 53

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