

EDITED BY GREGORY FLANNERY

All Democrats Are Not Created Equal

If you hoped change in Cincinnati might come through the Democratic Party, keep hoping. With the next city council election still 11 months away, **the party has already endorsed** all five Democratic incumbents eligible to run: Paul Booth, John Cranley, David Crowley, David Pepper and Alicia Reece. Term limits prevent Democrat Minette Cooper from running for another two-year term in 2003.

"We have a city council majority that works as a team and these officials have earned the support of the party and of the citizens of Cincinnati," says Bernadette Watson, co-chair of the Cincinnati Democratic Committee.

That team spirit doesn't always cross jurisdictional lines. Thus **Mayor Charlie Luken and Hamilton County Commissioner Todd Portune** are both Democrats, but their views on social issues often differ (in thanks for which, let all the people say, "Amen"). Luken, for example, has gone out of his way to badmouth *Streetvibes*, the monthly newspaper published by the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless. Portune has always supported the paper's mission, which is to highlight the needs of the homeless and give them a way to earn a living. Portune has proposed amending the county budget to include a \$53,000 grant for *Streetvibes*.

"Such an initiative is not only constructive in dealing with the myriad issues posed by homelessness and poverty and its attendant impact on those in that condition and those with whom they interact, but it is also consistent with Hamilton County's stated budget goals of funding those initiatives that enable us to remain a leader in transitioning individuals from poverty to self-sufficiency," Portune's proposal says.

But Wouldn't a Slowdown Be Superfluous?

The two men who allegedly burgled Police Chief Tom Streicher's apartment in Price Hill were "foolhardy," according to a headline in *The Cincinnati Enquirer*. But that's hardly the case. With the president of the Fraternal Order of Police all but **threatening a slowdown**, criminals would be foolhardy not to sense they have an open season in Cincinnati.

After approving the hiring of additional police officers and additional spending on police overtime last year, city council should reasonably expect a dramatic decrease in crime this year. But the opposite has happened. The num-

ber of homicides in the city has already passed 60, and the year's still not over.

If the city won't fire Streicher because of the woeful state of police-community relations during his tenure or because an inordinate number of his officers have been arrested this year or because he seems unable to keep his cops from harassing peaceful protesters, perhaps this is sufficient grounds: Under Streicher's leadership, Cincinnati is becoming an increasingly violent, dangerous place.

If you don't believe that, ask Streicher himself. He can't even keep his own home free from crime.

Xavier University won't tolerate racism, according to a letter recently issued by the Rev. Michael Graham, XU president. Two African-American students recently reported **racist incidents on campus**. One involved harassing telephone calls. Another student was given an item that contained a "racist symbol," Graham wrote.

"The incidents have been investigated and it appears that both resulted from the actions of people outside the Xavier campus community," the letter said. "Still, these events provide an opportunity for me to clearly state that actions and words motivated by racial hatred will not be tolerated at Xavier University. Such acts are considered hate crimes in the legal community and will be treated as such here on campus. The integrity of our learning environment as well as all members of our campus community will not be compromised by the racist acts of a few."

The West End has a new tool for neighborhood self-determination called Renaissance West, a development

corporation associated with the **West End Community Council**. Renaissance West will play a major role in shaping the revitalization of one of Cincinnati's most storied — and, for the past four decades, most neglected — neighborhoods.

"We will take charge of our own community," says Dale Mallory, president of the West End Community Council. "This will not be a free-for-all for developers to come in and do whatever they want. We are very excited. I hear a lot of talk about the Vine Street Plan and the Over-the-Rhine Plan. I'd like to offer a little friendly competition."

The members of the board of Renaissance West are Len Garrett, Reggie Boyd, Chris Stevens, Donald Tye, Nate Tubbs, Tony Moore, Ralph Moon, Joe Porter and Keith Blake.

"This is a blue ribbon development corporation," Mallory says. "These guys are sharp."

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PHOTO: JYMI BOLDEN

Hamilton County Municipal Judge William Mallory Jr. (right) swears in board members for Renaissance West, the new neighborhood development corporation in the West End.

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