

## J. SCOTT CHRISTIANSON

### First-term politicians often do a better job



Karen Miller, whose last campaign centered on paving roads, has taken the old adage "don't change horses in midstream" to heart. She explains to voters that now that she is up-to-speed, she can really do some work. That approach used to work well with me. However, after seeing several first-termers really tear into their work and get a lot accomplished, I have abandoned the idea that just holding an office is a qualification for re-election.

Jeff Barrow is having to battle the stereotypes associated with his green label and prove that he is not an aloof environmentalist who is out of touch with the economic concerns of working folks. Barrow is running a solid, grass-roots campaign. And contrary to Miller's assertions, Barrow has a good deal of experience in working with local government and citizen concerns — certainly no less than Miller had before her first term.

Barrow would be a good commissioner for several reasons: He is interested in exploring new ways of

making government work, and he isn't pursuing the position purely out of political ambition — if he was, he wouldn't be running on the Green Party ticket. ■

Wheat, the underdog in the Senate race, has scored high on the League of Conservation Voters' annual scorecard of votes on key environmental and conservation issues. Unfortunately, this race will not be won on the issues, but rather on negative TV ads and skin color. Wheat has never had much of a chance because of his color — that's Missouri reality in 1994. As for Ashcroft, I heard someone say of him, "We could save a lot of money by just sending a monkey to Washington that would just push the Republican button for every vote." ■

Amendment 7, Hancock II, would put a revenue cap on the state budget that could be devastating to education and social services. It is a flawed amendment in many ways and should be voted down.

Interestingly, Tribune editor and

publisher Hank Waters came out in favor of Amendment 7, largely based on the idea that the state legislature will fix the wording of the amendment once it is passed. I guess that Hank is working on a variation of the "kill them all and let God sort 'em out" idea. Myself, however, being hopelessly idealistic, believe that being a good citizen does not involve voting for items for which the effect is unknown.

Reporter Rudi Keller did an excellent analysis of Amendment 7 in last Sunday's Tribune. If you want a good view of the debate, get a copy. ■

Nationwide we are seeing a resounding anti-incumbent sentiment. Unfortunately, most of the energy is being directed at replacing incumbents this year, not on establishing new campaign financing rules, drafting term-limit legislation or reducing the effect of lobbyists and PACs.

The amount of resentment aimed at President Bill Clinton astounds me. It cannot be explained in rational terms. It can, however, be explained in the name-calling and rhetoric of right-wing media and politicians. Part of living with the freedom of speech is that we will never have a "truth in editorializing" standard that would make commentators like Rush Limbaugh provide facts to back up their opinions.