

acceptance of her appointment as a judge six months earlier. Yet no one is calling for Judge Klida to step down.

A couple days after Bock's call for Ms. Barnes' resignation in his Forum letter, the *Times*, incredibly, embraced his twisted logic in an editorial entitled "Resign the Appointment, Judge Barnes, and Fly toward Election with the Other Legal Eagles." In reference to Mr. Bock, it stated "He's calling for Barnes to prove her integrity and resign. We agree."

But why should Jennifer Barnes resign her new job? And how is it somehow unethical if she doesn't? Isn't that suggested when it's argued that her resignation is needed to prove her integrity? The newspaper and lawyer suggest that Jennifer Barnes had some involvement in the timing and method of her appointment. But there is no evidence of that.

Does anyone really think the rhetoric would be so shrill if any of the four men in the group of five lawyers vying for the position had received the sudden appointment instead? Or that there would be demands for his resignation? Just because the governor appointed Jennifer Barnes does not mean our new judge was a "willing accomplice" in some "diabolical" timetable, as Mr. Bock inferred. Perhaps Jennifer Barnes was merely the unwitting recipient of good fortune from a female, lame duck governor who saw an opportunity to make her second appointment of a female judge in Bay County in a scant period of some six months.

Harsh judgments based on emotional rhetoric rarely produce sound results. It's wholly inappropriate to condemn Ms. Barnes as an accomplice in some scheme to cheat or shortchange the voters in our upcoming election through "diabolical" timing when there's no evidence of Ms. Barnes having any part of it. The dictionary definition of diabolical is "concerning or characteristic of the devil; satanic; wicked or cruel."

Voters should be weary of attempts to paint such a nasty picture with such a broad brush. While I share the frustration felt by many in the timing of this judicial appointment, character assignment of Jennifer Barnes through undeserved inferences and innuendos is just plain wrong. Even vicious.

If the governor had waited until Judge Newcombe's last day on the job, or his last day on the payroll, and then went through the usual selection process she followed half a year ago, the same political appointment still would have been made. Probably from the same pool of wannabe judges who submitted their names six months prior.

That's the nature of the political beast, and it's all about politics -- on the bench, always, and regrettably, as evidenced in the tag team between then Prosecutor Sheeran and Judge Caprathe in the Donna Yost case.

*This is the only change in this last email - sent at 10:28 am*

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