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K-Mad would, at the least, fit in headlines

Another candidate for sheriff



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Add former state legislator **Ken Maddox**

to the list of well-connected law-enforcement types vying to be appointed sheriff.

I caught Maddox yesterday at the Sacramento airport as he was about to board a plane back to Orange County. He works as an aide to Board of Equalization member **Michelle Steel** these days, but in a previous life he was both a cop and a politician.

And Maddox says his calling card to the board of supervisors will be that the latter is more important than the former.

"Let's not kid ourselves," he said. "The position is a political position primarily and a law enforcement position secondarily. There are plenty of people in the department who can make the trains run on time.

"But we wouldn't be in this situation if it weren't a political position," he said, noting it was Carona's lack of political judgment rather than policing skills that got him indicted. "The last thing they need is a law-enforcement dinosaur to come in and bring old-school policy to Orange County."

Maddox, 43, says this because he realizes that he has less police experience than the other major announced candidates, **Jack Anderson**, **Bill Hunt** and **Ralph Martin**. Maddox was an L.A. County Sheriff's deputy for two years and a full-time Tustin patrol officer for eight years. When he was in the Assembly, between 1998 and 2004, he was a reserve Tustin officer. He says his advanced state P.O.S.T. credential is active.

He hasn't decided whether he'd be a candidate when the job comes up for election in 2010. I would assume so.

Even as you were reading in this space on Tuesday morning about **Mike Carona's** "Wall of Fame" being intact as he gave his last interviews as sheriff, the wall was coming down.

Reporter **Larry Welborn**

showed up to interview Acting Sheriff Anderson on Tuesday morning and said staffers were packing up the numerous photos Carona had taken of him with celebrities and politicians. And Anderson did not take over the former sheriff's spacious corner office, Welborn said, but has stayed with the windowless one that used to belong to **Don Haidl**.

What amazed me about that was not that Anderson wisely thought it presumptuous to move into the big office but rather to learn that Haidl had accepted a windowless one.

Haidl, it turns out, is not the only high-profile O.C. entity currently being sued by attorney **Dan Callahan**. It wasn't bad enough that I had to report the Register lost 25 employees earlier this month, I've now learned that we are being sued by the guy I'd previously dubbed "The One Billion Dollar Man."

That's because Callahan once won one of the largest jury awards in U.S. history, more than \$900 million on behalf of one of **Arnold Beckman's** old companies. Then, just recently, he won \$50 million in the Dana Point joggers case, which West legal publications says is the largest personal-injury award on record in the U.S. Ever.

Why is Callahan (who is suing Haidl on behalf of **Joe Cavallo** over legal fees) picking on a friendly company like us? Well, he represents a group of people who do – or did – deliver the Register. We have long considered them independent contractors. Their lawsuit alleges they meet the government definition of employees in a variety of ways, including the degree of direction we give them about how to deliver the paper. If that's true, we should have been ensuring they were making minimum wage, paying a portion of their taxes, plus some other benefits.

In a recent

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decision that doesn't help us any, the court certified it as a class action, meaning that the handful of guys whose names are on the initial suit could end up being several thousand guys. Callahan wants something like \$120 million out of us. And if he's successful, he says, he's going after other papers he claims do the same thing.

Oh, good. We're the cutting edge again.

Callahan will talk all day long about the case. Our lawyers will not talk at all. (Although I didn't try our loquacious **James Grossberg**, but then he's a First Amendment guy, not a labor specialist.)

Our response pleadings deny Callahan's allegations in a general way. What I got out of my own corporation was this prepared statement: "Freedom Communications is evaluating its options relative to this case. The company is actively engaged in defending the litigation."

It's set for trial May 19. A good week to be on vacation.

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