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FEATURED

Macomb County clerk candidate convicted twice of drinking-related incidents

By Jameson Cook, jcook@digitalfirstmedia.com and [@JamesonCook](https://twitter.com/JamesonCook) on Twitter 14 hrs ago



Lisa Sinclair

Macomb County clerk candidate Lisa Sinclair is being compared by political opponents to former clerk Karen Spranger because of two drunken-related arrests and several traffic citations in her past.

Sinclair, 42, a Republican from Harrison Township, was arrested for drunken disorderly in 2011 in Marysville and drunken driving in 2003 in Auburn Hills for a non-injury traffic crash, according to police reports. She also has eight traffic citations.

The Macomb County Democratic Party obtained the reports and recently mailed copies to area elected officials and candidates, and posted them on a web site that compares Sinclair to Spranger, whose 15 months of controversy ended last March with her ouster.

"The chaos caused by disgraced former Clerk Karen Spranger was a dangerous embarrassment," the web page says. "We cannot afford to have another Karen Spranger in charge of our most important personal documents. But Lisa Sinclair also has a troubling, embarrassing record of instability."

County Democratic Party Chairman Ed Bruley and five other Dem leaders say in the letter say they "feel a duty" to provide the information to the public.

"The public deserves to know of Lisa Sinclair's arrests related to a pattern of alcohol related problems and of Lisa Sinclair's disrespecting and verbally assaulting police officers with obscenities in public," they say.

Sinclair will face Democrat Fred Miller in the November election after both won their party's August primary. In a surprising outcome, Miller lost to Spranger by an extremely small margin in the 2016 election.

Sinclair scoffed at the comparison to Spranger and told The Macomb Daily she takes responsibility for her "mistakes." She blamed the 2003 incident on her immaturity of her 20s and her 2011 arrest on a "horrible" divorce in 2010 following a five-year marriage.

"I take full responsibility," Sinclair said. "I'm not proud of that. I'm proud of the person I am today. I've grown into a mature, responsible, stable adult. The stuff people put out happened a long time ago, ancient history.

"I believe this is a desperate attempt to make me look bad because they have a weak candidate who lost to Karen Spranger."

There has been no indication Spranger was ever arrested by police. She was ticketed in April 2017 for crashing her county-issued car in Roseville.

Spranger's tumultuous tenure, however, was marked by many conflicts and legal battles with county officials and unionized employees, resulting in low morale and employee departures. She was removed from office by a judge on request of county officials because she didn't live in the county when she filed for office.

The Clerk's Office oversees vital records, court records and documents, juror pools and elections. Vital records include birth, death and marriage certificates, military discharges, business licenses, concealed pistol licenses and veteran ID cards, among others.

Miller did not return a telephone seeking comment.

Sinclair described herself as strong and repeated her campaign theme that she is "tough" and will operate the Clerk's Office "efficiently" and "with a smile."

Sinclair has also responded to the revelations on her candidate Facebook page and multiple community Facebook pages.

"I have turned my life around, and I will do the same with the Clerk's office," she wrote on her page.

In the April 2011 incident in St. Clair County, Sinclair was arrested after a taxi cab driver, who picked her up from Lynwood Bar, dropped her off at a gas station on Busha Highway about 2 a.m. and asked a cashier to call police, according to a Marysville Police Department report. Sinclair was screaming and yelling obscenities at the cab driver, police said.

Sinclair told police she called for a cab because she was too drunk to drive and during the ride the driver asked if she had money to pay, the report says. Sinclair "became extremely indignant at that point," the officers said.

While talking to police, Sinclair showed signs of intoxication and "became very profane" and called the cab driver vulgar names.

Sinclair continued to yell and was ordered into the store to wait for another cab, police said. As officers were leaving, she exited and "stated to officers 'f--- you' and proceeded to laugh and use profanities in a loud voice," the report says.

She was arrested and taken to jail, where she “continued her loud and obnoxious behavior,” police say. She spent a night in jail and was convicted of drunken disorderly, a misdemeanor, and sentenced to a \$150 fine or 15 days in jail in 72nd District Court. She paid the fine.

Sinclair told The Macomb Daily there are falsehoods in the report but declined to elaborate.

In the April 2003 incident, she crashed the Honda she was driving into the rear of a Chrysler stopped in the left lane at a traffic light on southbound Lapeer Road at Opdyke Road in Auburn Hills, according to the report. A city police officer was stopped in a patrol car in the right lane.

She was charged with drunken driving and refusing a breathalyzer test; a subsequent blood test revealed a blood-alcohol content of .186 percent, according to the report.

For the drunk driving, she pleaded to a reduced charge of impaired driving in June 2003 in 52/53 District Court, according to court records. She was sentenced in August 2003 to 18 months probation and 50 hours of community service, and was ordered to receive outpatient substance abuse counseling, submit to random alcohol testing and attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings as directed by her probation officer, records say. She complied with conditions and was granted early release from probation in December 2004, records say.

She paid a \$150 fine for refusing a blood-alcohol test.

Sinclair said she does not have a drinking problem but sometimes has a drink in private.

Sinclair said her divorce was the “worst experience of my life” and she bounced back from “a downward spiral” by earning a nursing degree at Macomb Community College from 2012 to 2016, that led to her current job as an emergency room nurse at Sinai-Grace Hospital in the Detroit Medical Center.

Of eight traffic tickets, three in 2011 were for expired plates, no proof of insurance and defective equipment.

Sinclair does not dispute the tickets and admitted she was “careless.”

She blamed a 2017 defective equipment citation on a broken light that cost \$1,000 to repair.

She also was cited for impeding traffic in 2015, disobeying a traffic signal in 2010, parking in a handicapped space in 2000 and failure to use a seatbelt in 1999, according to the Democratic Party.

Sinclair earned a bachelor's degree in political science at Michigan State University. She was a communications specialist and legislative aide for the Michigan Senate Republicans from 1998 to 2008 and managed a physician's office for about four years before moving to St. Clair County in 2011.

Miller, 44, of Mount Clemens, has been Oakland County deputy treasurer since January 2017. He served three two-year terms each in the state House of Representatives and on the Macomb County Board of Commissioners.

The reports can be downloaded at sinclairisanotherspranger.com.

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