

WDEV950 070308

### **Salmon and Brock**

Two years ago Republican Randy Brock, probably the most skilled auditor this state has ever had, won the endorsement of every newspaper for reelection.

Democrat Tom Salmon, the affable son of a famous governor from Rockingham, planned to run for the Senate from Windham county. But senator Peter Shumlin, also from Windham county, did not relish a three way Senate primary, so he pushed Salmon to run statewide for auditor.

Shumlin and his party meanwhile had agreed to leave the auditor's race open, since they didn't think they had a prayer of ousting the competent and popular Brock. This would give their Progressive allies the chance to run a hopeless candidate, but get enough votes to remain a major party.

With his customary agility, Shumlin broke that deal. In a huge Democratic year, Salmon ousted Brock by a tiny 114 votes – while Prog Martha Abbott got 9 % from Progs and Democrats who kept the deal.

Now, two years later, Salmon has shown himself to be a popular and capable auditor- and is seeking reelection unopposed while serving with the Navy Reserve in Afghanistan. Brock has passed up an unwinnable rematch, but will run for the state Senate seat from Franklin county.

As a senator, Randy Brock would give the Republicans the strong, informed, principled voice they have long lacked in the Senate run by the senator from VPIRG, Peter Shumlin. This ought to make for a very interesting two years.

This is John McClaughry – thanks for listening.