

Gilbert eyes run for House

By Greg Kowalski
staff writer

Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Alice Gilbert is circulating petitions, considering entering the race for the new 11th Congressional seat.

Gilbert, who lives in West Bloomfield, has not yet formally declared herself to be a candidate. But if she runs, it will be as a Republican, as are Honigman and Knollenberg.

"I'm gravely concerned about the situation in Washington. The skills I have acquired over 31 years would be of good use in that branch of government," she said.

She cited the recent check-bouncing scandal and deteriorating public opinion of Congress as a reason for running.

"There is a lack of respect for that body. And respect for the laws made by lawmakers," said Gilbert, who expects to make a decision about running soon.

MEANWHILE, HONIGMAN will formally announce his candidacy at a celebration from 7-9 p.m. Tuesday at the Novi Hilton. Since Honigman's campaign calls for making change in Congress, he will ask supporters at the event to contribute 92 cents in "change" as a symbolic gesture.

"It is time for a new generation of leaders to emerge and take charge of Congress," Honigman said. "We need a Congressman who will represent the new 11th District on national and international issues, but maintains strong local ties and stays on top of local concerns."

Honigman is also boasting recent endorsements by Oakland County Prosecutor Richard Thompson and L. Brooks Patterson, former prosecutor and county executive candidate.

"Dave is a friend of law enforcement and has been effective in giving us the tools we need to fight crime," Thompson said. "He has been alert and attentive to our needs."

Last year, Honigman was named by the Police Officers Association of Michigan as Legislator of the Year.



Judge Alice Gilbert

KNOLLENBERG ALSO has received several endorsements, including the support of Bloomfield, Oakland County Sheriff John Nichols and Frank Stella, a Detroit community activist.

Knollenberg said he didn't know if Gilbert's entrance into the race would have an effect on his chances.

"It could go both ways. It could help me, but it could pull votes from me or from Dave (Honigman). I just know we're looking at our own situation," Knollenberg said.

The new 11th district includes Birmingham, West Bloomfield, Lathrup Village, Orchard Lake, Bloomfield Hills, Bloomfield Township, Farmington Hills, Franklin, Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Sylvan Lake, Redford, most of Southfield and the part of Livonia north of I-96.

Verdict isn't license to use force — cops

By Casey Hens
staff writer

Local police officials are disputing the perception that the verdict in the Rodney King beating case will give police everywhere license to use excessive force.

"There's nobody here that understands that message — there's nobody here who got that message," said Gary Goss, deputy public safety director for the city of Farmington.

Goss said most officers understand that the criminal trial was just the beginning of the process, and that the four officers charged in the case still face stiff federal charges on civil rights violations.

Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer called the Los Angeles case an "isolated incident" and said it is "not indicative of the thousands of officers who go about their business in a very professional manner."

The four officers, who are white, were acquitted last Wednesday of assault and excessive force charges against King, who is black. An excessive force charge against one officer ended in a hung jury. The cases were removed from Los Angeles to suburban Simi Valley, where a jury trial was held.

Since the verdict, there has been killing, looting and violence throughout Los Angeles, and reports of isolated incidents in seven other cities.

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— Gary Goss
deputy director

LAW ENFORCEMENT people in the Farmington area said they were surprised at the verdict, especially with the most damaging evidence which was a videotape of the incident.

Some, like Farmington Public Safety Director Frank LaHoff, called the decision "astounding," said the tape showed "obvious excessive force" and said he was disappointed in the way the entire case was handled.

"I don't think you'll find a police chief in this country who would say that force was necessary," LaHoff said. "There were too many people there, too many supervisors there who should have stepped in."

LaHoff said all police agencies, including Farmington, to fall under more public scrutiny because of the case, and expects more complaints to be filed against all police agencies. He said law enforcement agencies have experienced a collective "black eye" from the King incident.

Since a videotape captured the March 3, 1991 King beating incident and it began airing on national television, police agencies faced an initial round of scrutiny which has proved to be beneficial. "Police departments have reviewed all their use of force policies and had a closer and greater focus on training," Goss said. "There has been some good that has come out of this."

Dwyer said he expects the King case to draw increased attention to the excessive force issue in the coming weeks, and said it was "highly doubtful" that excessive force could happen here in Farmington or Farmington Hills.

Jesus Center gets deadline

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because Jesus Center pastors and representatives did not have an attorney present at the time. "They believed in good faith... that they had reached an agreement. As long as they were making progress..."

the city would work with them. They also agreed to stop housing the homeless," Costello told Gilbert.

The Farmington Hills Zoning Board of Appeals denied the center's April 7 request to leave the homeless. The center is appealing the ZBA's decision but a court date has not yet been scheduled.

Gilbert refused to set aside the order and she also would close the center as requested by Beckerleg.

She ordered Beckerleg to provide the center with a written list of what necessary work on the building remains. Costello criticized the city for not providing reports to Jesus Center officials following previous inspections. After the April 1 deadline, "again there was no written report of the inspection," Costello added.

Gilbert questioned Beckerleg on the city's procedures and then ordered him to provide a list of outstanding violations. An inspection of the building was conducted Wednesday afternoon. Written reports were to be hand-delivered to Costello Thursday. They have 10 days as of today to finish the work," Beckerleg said.

JOHN COSSIN, co-pastor at the Jesus Center, told Gilbert that wanting to house the homeless prompted the city's complaints about the building. "We never had problems with inspections until we got the homeless in." He also complained that the city told the media the center wanted to house the homeless permanently. "That's not true," he added.

But Beckerleg said the center's request to the ZBA was for permanent housing. "He (Cossin) is confusing that issue (homeless) with the fire and building issues," the court will decide that (homeless) issue."

In February, the city filed suit in Oakland County Circuit Court to force the center to stop housing homeless people and to correct the documented violations.

The ZBA denied the center's request to allow people to sleep at the center, which is zoned single-family residential. The request according to zoning officials, had led down to requesting a permanent land use.

Beckerleg said both sides will present briefs on the homeless issue. A pretrial is likely to be scheduled within the next 30-45 days.

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"I've heard plenty of verdicts. I don't like it, but I didn't go out and set fire to things and shoot people," Birschele said. "People have other prejudices they can go through. It (the violence) is a way of life now, and I think it's wrong."

As of late last week, dozens of people had been killed and more than 1,600 injured in the violence. Federal troops were on standby Friday to aid state and local officials in California, if needed.

Farmington Hills resident Stanley Hajduk believes the news media's constant playing of the amateur videotape during the past year caused last week's problems.

"They played it way too often. The people only get half a version of what really happened," he said. "What they (the media) has done is prejudiced the trial. They made it a spectacle."

The jurors are the only ones who have the whole picture, Hajduk said. The situation in Los Angeles had Farmington area people talking all over town last week. Most everyone had an opinion.

"I don't think he (King) could have been beaten, but they (the police) were just trying to stop him," said Dorothy Quaine of Livonia as she shopped in downtown Farmington.

Quaine said she is most upset at the lack of respect shown by everyone in the case.

"I do think we have to have more respect for justice," she said. "If there's something wrong with the system, then get to the bottom of it."

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