

First year:
U.S. Rep.
Joe Knol-
lenberg
has been in
Congress
for nearly
a year. He
and wife
Sandie are
adapting to
the new
lifestyle.



STEPHEN CASTRELLI/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mrs. Knollenberg jumps into D.C.'s political scene

By GREG KOWALSKI
STAFF WRITER

When Mr. Knollenberg went to Congress, so did Mrs. Knollenberg.

Freshman U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg, R-Bloomfield Township, is wrapping up his first year in Congress, and while it's been a learning experience for him, his wife Sandie has had to do her own share of adjusting.

"It's definitely a change," she said. Dividing her time between Washington, D.C., and the Birmingham-Bloomfield area has been a challenge. While other couples in their age group are looking toward retirement, the Knollenbergs made a nearly complete career change a year ago.

He left the insurance business to serve in Congress, and she has become immersed in the Washington political scene.

Sandie Knollenberg is president of the 103rd Congress Freshman Spouses Club. That's a non-partisan organization of the spouses of the new members of Congress. They help each other as they make the transition to life in the nation's capital.

"We share our concerns," she said. The club has 71 female and 15 male spouses. Being married to members of Congress, they often are in the public eye themselves, so they find it helps if they can get support from others in the same situation.

For example, the club brought in a guest speaker to coach them on the art of public speaking.

In addition to the Freshman Spouses Club, Sandie Knollenberg belongs to the Republican Capital Hill Club and the Congressional Club. Both organizations sponsor charitable events and allow her to become involved in such issues as cancer prevention.

Through the Congressional Club breast cancer program, Sandie Knollenberg helps promote cancer awareness and is involved in a program to encourage



FILE PHOTO

Adjustment exercise: Sandie Knollenberg's life in Washington is working out, but she still videotapes her TV program, "Sandie's Fitness Firm." Here she's pictured with Lynn Zoller.

breast self-exams.

She also is on a committee to promote awareness of mental health problems.

Health issues have long been a concern of Sandie Knollenberg. She still videotapes her TV program, "Sandie's Fitness Firm," an aerobics show that is carried on local cable stations, and on PBS which airs across North America.

Being a spouse of a Congressman creates a "unique kind of lifestyle," Sandie Knollenberg said. While it can put a strain on having a normal family relationship, the Knollenbergs said they try to maintain a normal life.

Other members of the Knollenberg clan also get into the act when they can. Sons Steve and Marty participate in Joe Knollenberg's periodic town meetings in the district.

"I feel like my life is like a fairy tale," said Sandie Knollenberg. "This is sort of any girl's dream."

Knollenberg debut eye-opener

By GREG KOWALSKI
STAFF WRITER

Because of his hectic daily schedule, freshman U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg doesn't have much time to take stock of the surroundings in Washington.

It's only at those odd moments, such as walking down the Capitol Building steps, when the Bloomfield Township Republican will pause among the historic buildings at the center of the U.S. government that the full realization sinks in.

He's in Washington, helping shape the direction of the American government.

About a year ago he operated an insurance office in Troy, N.Y. Now, at age 60, he has a new career representing the 11th U.S. Congressional District, which encompasses a wide area from Highland Township to Birmingham to Redford and Lyon Township.

Although not a newcomer to the political scene — he was Republican Party chairman for Oakland County and 18th District party chairman, among other things — he said the transition to Washington has been a major change.

"I don't think anybody could have told me what to expect,"

Knollenberg said. "Until you get there you don't know that to expect. It's an all new world."

Knollenberg is on the Small Business and Banking and Finance committees in the House of Representatives, having been one of 110 freshmen Congressmen elected in 1992.

It's been a year of successes and frustration, he said.

During the campaign Knollenberg pledged to reduce government waste and make the system more efficient. But coping with Congress hasn't been easy, he said.

"There are too many things going on at one time," he said. "You can't go to all the meetings."

And there are committees aplenty. Even though he has managed to push through some reforms and eliminate some redundant committees, there are still more committees than needed, Knollenberg said.

But there are positive sides to Congress as well, he said.

"There are a lot of bright people there. I don't say they always vote bright, but I'm impressed with the quality of the people."

And Knollenberg said he is making progress in living up to campaign promises. He's already

introduced a number of pieces of legislation such as a proposal for a Constitutional amendment to balance the budget, a bill to limit taxes for certain small businesses, a bill to authorize public housing agencies to set policies regarding the amount of rent paid by tenants in public housing units and a bill to amend the Social Security Act to promote educational opportunities.

"I've never worked so hard in all my life. . . except maybe the first week of boot camp," he said. He gave a breakdown of a typical week.

Mondays and Fridays are non-session days, allowing time to prepare for upcoming sessions and review past sessions.

Tuesdays begin with an 8 a.m. meeting, "and meetings can carry on into the night," Knollenberg said.

"Wednesday is the roughest day," he said. Meetings begin at 7 a.m. and can last until late at night. Meanwhile, Congress is in session.

"And sandwiched in between are meetings with constituents."

"Thursday is a little like Wednesday, except most members of Congress want to get back to their districts for the weekend," Knollenberg said. So

they're busy making plans for things to do at home.

Knollenberg said he tries to return to the district every other weekend. He and wife Sandie live in Virginia near Washington and have a house in Bloomfield Township.

"It's very busy," he said. "As a new member of Congress, you want to keep in touch with constituents as much as possible."

Knollenberg has an office in Washington, D.C., staffed with six full-time employees. He has a local office with five full-time employees in Farmington Hills and maintains a small office with one full-time and one part-time employee in Livonia.

Because he has less staff than allowed by Congress, his operating expenses are less, so he returns \$100,000 of allotted money a year to the government. That's cutting measures, he said.

It would be nice, he said, if others in Congress would be cost-conscious.

Bills to cut spending and reduce the budget deficit get sidetracked. And often when programs are cut, the money is simply channeled into other areas, he said.

Ruby Tuesday runs up tab for liquor license transfer

By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

With a little luck, all's well that ends well for a new restaurant in Farmington Hills.

The Farmington Hills City Council unanimously approved the transfer of a liquor license from Arthur Kenjorski to Morrison Restaurants Inc., for the Ruby Tuesday restaurant at 12 Mile and Orchard Lake, now under construction.

John Polasky, the attorney representing Ruby Tuesday, said he can't tell how long it will take the state Liquor Control Commission to give final approval, but added that he is working to make sure it is in time for the planned Jan. 20 opening.

"It usually takes about 35

days," he said. "They want to open on time, so I'm going to do everything I can to get it through in time."

Polasky had tried to obtain the city's last allotted Class C license, only to be turned down. That left him with few options and little time after he lost his bid for that license at the Dec. 13 meeting.

That license would have cost the restaurant chain a little less than \$2,000, mostly for handling fees and police background checks, said city clerk Kathy Duran. The transferred license will cost \$47,000.

After losing out on the city's license, Polasky, who has obtained liquor licenses for several area restaurants, went hunting.

"We did have discussions about this very thing happening," he said. "We were fortunate to find this license."

City council members had praised the restaurant, but denied the license so as to keep the city's final license (until after the 2000 census) in case of another need, including the possibility of a city-owned arena with restaurant in the future.

But councilmen Aldo Vagnozzi and Terry Sever strongly suggested the council meet in a study session to come up with a policy and guidelines for awarding liquor licenses to avoid future problems, such as litigation, and to give those seeking a license a clearer understanding of requirements.

OBITUARIES

AXEL A. RUTILA

Mr. Rutila, 90, of Scottsdale, Ariz., formerly of Farmington, died Dec. 17.

Born in Calumet, Mr. Rutila was a retired federal employee.

Survivors include his daughter, Jane Grose; sons, Donald J. and Thomas II; seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Services were at the Messinger Mortuary, Scottsdale, Ariz.

STELLA KATANIK

Mrs. Katanik, 76, of Farmington

Hills died Dec. 18.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Mrs. Katanik was a baker. She was a member of Celiac Sprue Association of America.

Survivors include her daughter, Barbara Ann Pattinson; brothers, John, Walter and Mike; Turko; sisters, Josephine Sorozak, Helen Howells, Sophie Meier and Dorothy Royak; two grandchildren.

A memorial service will be at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 12, in Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 2800 New Market Road, Farmington Hills. The Rev. T. Richard Marcis will officiate.

Arrangements were made by

the McCabe Funeral Home, Farmington Hills.

FAE E. BARTELS

Mrs. Bartels, 86, of Farmington died Dec. 19.

Born in Middletown, Ohio, Mrs. Bartels was a homemaker.

Survivors include her daughter, Janet Hummon; two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Services were at the McCabe Funeral Home, Farmington Hills. Memorials may be made to the Michigan Cancer Foundation.

Break-in from page 1A

Howard Sigrist, who was hit for \$2,450 in equipment, retained his sense of humor as well as much of what he needed to keep his practice going.

"They didn't take everything," he said. "I was surprised. They didn't take my fax, and they didn't take my computer. My wife

was kind enough to give me an early Christmas present of an answering machine so I can keep going."

Sigrist quipped that the criminals were "bitting the hand that feeds them."

"I'm a criminal attorney," he said. "I'm supposed to defend

people who do this to you. They're not supposed to do it to me."

On the more serious side, Godwin said in light of the value of office equipment, businesses should take steps to prevent break-ins.

"Most office buildings need to look at getting a burglary alarm," he said.

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