

Honigman savors win over Barnett

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

It's Wednesday morning, and despite a 2-to-1 drubbing in her bid to unseat incumbent state Sen. Dave Honigman, Vicki Barnett was smiling.

"I gave it my best shot," Barnett said, "and I lost. But I'm still smiling. I think Dave was smiling too."

Earlier in the day, Barnett called Honigman to offer congratulations on his decisive victory. "I offered my support," she said. "He ran a good campaign and he had a right to smile."

Honigman was indeed smiling, as returns showed strong support for him and his party.

"It was a good time to be a Republican," he said at his home late Tuesday as televised results indicated the largest GOP landslide in more than four decades.

According to unofficial figures from the Oakland County elections office, Honigman, a West Bloomfield Republican, pulled 64 percent of the vote, compared with 32 percent for Barnett, a Democrat, and 8 percent for David S. Thompson, a Libertarian. Barnett and Thompson both live in Farmington Hills.

Honigman savored his second consecutive victory in a far-reaching district that includes West Bloomfield, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Novi, South Lyon and Commerce, Milford and Lyon townships.

Wednesday morning, as the impact of the election sunk in, Honigman was smiling again. "I can't help but feel a sense of awe and majesty," he said. "Political power in this country passes so peacefully and easily from one group of people to another."

Honigman, elected to the Michigan House of Representatives in 1984, gave full credit for his victory to ticket leader Gov. John Engler, whose campaign set the tone for the GOP.

"But I also like to think my record as an incumbent had



Winning smiles: Dave Honigman and his wife, Joann, watched election returns in the living room of their West Bloomfield home. Honigman easily won re-election to the state Senate over challengers Vicki Barnett and David Thompson.

something to do with it," Honigman said. "I think voters know that I work hard and I'm available."

"This is also a good year for short candidates," joked Honigman, who stands about 5 feet, 4 inches.

As Honigman savored his victory Wednesday, he munched on fried chicken wings and washed them down with soda. "It's great to be healthy again," he said.

The munchies were significant because of stomach problems the

39-year-old former college wrestler suffered earlier this year. In February, Honigman was rushed to the hospital with problems that necessitated repeated surgery and kept him out of the Legislature for much of the year.

His health problems were not life-threatening, but they did prompt the removal of much of his intestines. They also necessitated a very bland diet — "mostly gruel," he said — for months.

"But I'm healthy again," Honigman said, savoring the

chicken wings almost as much as the election results.

"I'm honored so many people expressed confidence in me," he said. "Voters have entrusted me with an awesome mission, and I'm very excited by the promise of a new four-year opportunity."

Barnett said she didn't particularly like losing. "But it's good to know Dave is smiling again."

"But he better not get too confident," Barnett cautioned. "I'm not going away. I'm going to continue looking over his shoulder."



Bedtime story: Lindsay Kenney, 2½, of Farmington Hills waits somewhat patiently in line with her mother Barb, who just made it to the polls in time to cast her ballot Tuesday night.

Local voters roll with GOP landslide

BY TOM BAEZ
STAFF WRITER

Farmington-area votes were pebbles in the mighty Republican landslide that rumbled across the state in Tuesday's general election.

"It was even a little more Republican than usual," said Aldo Vagnoni with a sigh. The Farmington Hills Councilman is a Democrat in this rock-ribbed Republican territory.

Janice Parks, voting in Farmington Hills' Precinct 6, said she was "voting Republican, Right to Life and NRA." She also said she hoped more Republicans would gain office. Her wish was granted this year.

Republican Gov. John Engler steamrolled Democrat Howard Wolpe, and Farmington-area voters helped by favoring Engler, 23,980 votes to 10,914 for Wolpe.

Shankar Burde, a Farmington Hills resident, cast his ballot for Engler Tuesday evening at Larkshire Elementary School.

"The state has done well under his leadership," Burde said. "I feel he'll do even better in the next four years."

And local electors aided Repub-

lican Spencer Abraham's victory march to the U.S. Senate by casting 20,745 votes his way. Democrat Bob Carr received 11,972 Farmington-area votes.

Proposal C, which was supposed to end lawsuit abuse and reform the auto insurance industry, was defeated statewide and in the Farmington-area, 22,364 votes to 12,161.

Bill Corliss of Farmington said he voted against Proposal C because the same proposition kept coming up in election after election.

"My vote wasn't against the proposal itself, but against the process," he said.

But Gineela Walsh of Farmington Hills said yes to C. "I work for an insurance company," she said.

Locally, poll workers and the people in the city clerk's offices were kept busy this election. Some 30,767 ballots were cast in Farmington Hills, which has 62,633 registered voters. Of the 9,700 absentee ballots issued in the Hills, 9,087 were returned.

The turnout also was heavy in the city of Farmington, where 83.4 percent of the voters went to the polls.

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"because we ran an aggressive campaign. It was a tough year to run as a Democrat."

Fernquist had to console himself that at 34.81 percent of the vote he slightly outdid the expect-

ed, or "base vote" of Democrats in the district, and also fared slightly better than fellow Dem Bob Carr.

Moffitt ran on his experience and his willingness to cut county

spending. He pointed to department cuts in the last county budget as proof of his fiscal restraint.

Fernquist, however, characterized the incumbent as a "tax and

spend Republican." But despite mailings, signs and his efforts to draw attention to the county commission's approval of the maximum tax rate allowed, which will generate an additional \$4.2 million, he was unsuccessful.

Dolan swamps Libertarian, out-of-sight opponents in 37th

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Who is Richard Dailey and why's he running against me? That was the question 37th District Rep. Jan Dolan asked herself during the fall campaign, after escaping a tough GOP primary challenge from Andrew Raczowski.

Dolan easily defeated her Democratic challenger Richard Dailey, 23,350 to 9,390, a margin of 69.28 percent. Libertarian Yezra Derahmanian finished with 978 votes (3 percent) and there were 25 write-in votes.

"I didn't know what to expect," said Dolan, who won a fourth

term. "I never did meet him." Dailey could not be reached for comment.

Since she did not quite know what her opponent was about, Dolan worked hard during the fall campaign, she said. Dolan was never seriously challenged. And statewide, her party did well.

"I think the majority of people want fewer taxes," she said in explaining the Republican landslide. "There is an anti-incumbency feeling, and people are ready for a change."

Fortunately for Dolan, that feeling didn't carry into the 37th District.

Derahmanian, who pushed an

anti-tax agenda, admitted that Republicans had stolen some of the Libertarian Party's thunder with their anti-tax theme.

"They're going to have to put up," he said. "I'll continue to be involved and to speak up."

Dolan said she expects the next two years to be busy ones when

the Republicans will be in the majority. She said GOP leaders will have more committee chairmanships, including on appropriations, where she is a member.

"We know we are close to the limit of what we can spend in Lansing," Dolan said. "We have to keep spending down and make sure we have the right priorities."

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"One person as mayor cannot get anything passed or push anything through without the support of three other council members," Oliverio said. "I'm really not concerned about that at all."

Vagnoni was also one of five council members who put the measure on the ballot. He appeared less than enthusiastic at its passage, though.

"I just voted to put it on the ballot," Vagnoni said. "Let the people decide and they did."

The land acquisition proposal would have generated \$6 million

over five years.

It was seen as a way to resolve controversial commercial development such as the one proposed at 12 Mile and Middlebelt. If passed, the city would've had an option of buying the land instead of having it developed.

"I try to tell my colleagues that if you die it in with (12 Mile and Middlebelt) developer, Jonna, you're going to lose it," Vagnoni said.

Farmington's road improvement plan had a smoother ride.

City Manager Frank Leuhoff

waited until midnight when absentee ballots were counted. He was pleased with the outcome.

"It's good for the city," Leuhoff said. "It's a program that makes sense."

Special assessments are eliminated under the plan, which city officials said will save \$12 million in the long run. Vagnoni said, "I supported the millage."

Farmington resident Rich Weinkauff said, "I'm willing to pay higher property taxes so I or someone else doesn't get socked with high assessments."

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Wolf said it was no accident that Republicans were celebrating at the Radisson Hotel in Farmington Hills.

"Farmington Hills used to be the orphan of Oakland County," Wolf said. "Now Farmington and Farmington Hills are the center. Our population has grown, and this has become an important area."

Knollenberg's chief of staff Paul Weldon said the win exceeded even optimistic expectations.

"We're close to 70 percent in Farmington Hills," Weldon said. "We're at 65 percent in West

Bloomfield. Two years ago we were at 50 percent (against Walter Briggs IV)."

Weldon also had praise for Breshgold's "clean, positive campaign."

At the eastern end of Grand River, the scene was darker for Breshgold and his supporters. After an aggressive campaign, he had suffered the fate of Democrats throughout the area, and even the state, who could not convince voters to split votes and go for individual Democrats.

"I think that the top of the tick-

et (Democratic gubernatorial candidate Howard Wolpe) was weak and it passed on down," said a tired Breshgold. "Of course, it didn't help to be outspent \$300,000 to \$30,000. But most Republicans vote the straight ticket while Democrats will often split (their ballots)."

Knollenberg said welfare reform "that really reduces spending," sensible health care reform, and revisions to the crime bill, including a truth in sentencing statute, will be areas he'll work hard for in the coming term.

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