

And then there was one...

After two drop out, Jacobs stands alone in new 14th Senate race

BY JONI HUBRED
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Gilda Jacobs' name might not be familiar to everyone in Farmington and Farmington Hills, but she'd like to change all that. Currently a state representative serving the 35th House District, she is a Democratic candidate for the new 14th State Senate District, having announced her candidacy last fall. Since that time, she's been spending a fair amount of time on the west side of town, which isn't at all unfamiliar to her.

"I have been reaching out to this new part of the district for months, to learn more about what's on people's minds," Jacobs said, adding her parents have had a house in the Hills for years.

Jacobs seems confident about winning the district, which stretches from here to Hazel Park on the far east side of Oakland County. At this point, that confidence seems well placed; she's the only one still in the race (see sidebar).

But this still won't be the easiest race she's ever run. That would be her candidacy for Oakland County Commission, which

Barnett says 'no' to Lansing

Vicki Barnett's life is a hectic one, too hectic she says for her to continue as a Democratic candidate for the State Senate.

Barnett, who would have opposed Gilda Jacobs in the 14th District primary said this week that she wants to be active in her children's lives, as Samantha will graduate from Harrison High this year and Jordan is a junior.

Additionally, her work on the Farmington Hills city council, service on Southeast Michigan Council of Governments and on several National League of Cities committees take up a great deal of time. She is particularly concerned with a group that is promoting inter-

agency communication, which would better connect law enforcement and emergency services departments in times of national crisis.

Also, Barnett said, she has come to believe her place is in local government, at least for now.

"This is where I belong," she said, "serving my community at the most basic level of government."

John Akouri, a previously announced Republican candidate for the post, switched gears early this year and is now seeking the 37th District State House seat.

—by staff writer Joni Hubred

ran all of three weeks. She was approached to become a write-in candidate after the death of an incumbent commissioner.

"That was the best campaign I ever ran," she said, laughing. Jacobs represented the County's 23rd District from 1995-98.

serving as Democratic Caucus Chair for three out of the four years. She was also a member on various advisory boards, on task forces for managed care and the county jail, the Communications Task Force and the Area Agency on Aging and the oversight committee for the evaluation of Haven's Coordinated Approach to Domestic Violence Program.

Her professional background includes work with the Jewish Association for Residential Care for persons with disabilities. She was an aide to State Sen. Doug Ross from 1978-82 and a special education teacher in Madison School District from 1971 to 1976.

Jacobs describes the 14th as "a very diverse district," containing some of the Detroit area's poorest and wealthiest neighborhoods. "It's mixed racially, mixed culturally...It's a fun district to represent because of that."

A firm believer in local control, Jacobs believes many legislators have forgotten their roots in local government. "People got up there and they forget who they are. They get caught up in the 'glamour,' the perceived power."

Term limits, she says, have affected the legislature in many

ways. "They don't know long-term. They're there to make their mark," she said.

That leads to inter- and intra-caucus tension, as lawmakers even from the same party may be pitted against one another as they run for other political positions after their three terms are up, Jacobs explained.

"The politics now really clouds good public policy," she said, adding that lobbyists gain power as institutional knowledge stored with state lawmakers and their staffs leave.

The issues

She came into state government thinking she would be working on women's issues, but that didn't happen. Instead, her areas of concern have ranged from good mental health policy and consumer issues - like requiring health care professionals to give patients their contact lens prescriptions - to sensible gun control.

Jacobs is also working on an idea that evolved out of her busy lifestyle. When she'd buy prepared foods for her family - husband John and daughters Rachel and Jessica - she'd find a "sell by" date but no indication on the package about how long the food could stay in her refrigerator before she served it.

A more critical issue, one she says she will "beat the governor up on" forever, is the announced closing of Northville Psychiatric Hospital, one of the few remaining long-term care facilities for people with mental illnesses.

"I feel he decimated the mental health system," she said.

Oakland County's mental health authority is currently facing a \$36 million error in accounting, she said, as what was supposed to be an \$18 million surplus turned out to be an \$18 million deficit.

"You can't fix those kinds of mistakes with belt-tightening," she said, adding that her professional background gives her a special heart for this issue. "I've been keenly aware of the need for the community to augment funds to provide services to people. I know how important it is to pay people who do the everyday kinds of work with people who have developmental disabilities or mental illnesses."

Given that her constituency will grow (Jacobs says her phone already rings off the hook most days), why did she decide to pursue a Senate seat?

"I really think we're going to have a Democratic governor," she said. "It will put me and other Democrats in a position to effectuate the public policy we wanted to pursue when we were elected. I think I'll be in a better position to serve my community."

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Orthodontics

by Josephine Finazzo, D.M.D.

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P.S. Aside from the functional considerations we noted above, children who receive needed orthodontic treatment also get a boost in their self-esteem.

Arthritis Today

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SPRING AND ARTHRITIS

Arthritis notes the coming of spring; the sun affects both the earth and your joints. For example, in psoriatic arthritis, the warm sun's ultraviolet rays act like a balm for the psoriasis, which in turn, soothes inflamed joints.

If you have Lupus Arthritis, the sun threatens you. Sun striking your body sets off changes in DNA in the skin, that then stimulates your lymphocytes to action. The result is antibodies to your own body proteins, with possible harm to your eyes, heart, kidneys, pituitary gland.

Many people with rheumatoid arthritis experience a flare of their condition in early spring. They find themselves burdened with increased fatigue, hours of stiffness in the morning, and joints in the hands and feet that stay swollen throughout the day. Increased medicine or steroid injection of the worse joints doesn't exert the same healing effect that these therapies provide other times of the year.

Patients who endure this spring cycle for years find that if they attempt nothing different with their therapy, the flare reaches by mid May. The explanation for why joint inflammation flares and then recedes cannot come from the effect of the sun. Nor can a surge in sex hormones be the answer. This influence of spring on rheumatoid arthritis happens in women who are post-menopausal, and in men, although testosterone production is level throughout the year. Likely, the change relates to the influence of light on the body. Studies in this area are working on theories that can prevent the body's ill-conceived response that results in a worsening of arthritic joints.

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