

New members . . .

Broecker frames conservative legislative agenda

Running for the Legislature wasn't Rep. Sherry Broecker's idea. The Independent-Republican from Vadnais Heights wanted to



Rep. Sherry Broecker

focus time and energy on raising her children and managing her custom picture framing business, The Frame Broeckers (pronounced Broekers).

It took some persuading from Gov. Arne Carlson to get her into the race against DFL incumbent Marc Asch.

"When Arne called, I just really gave it some serious thought. I thought maybe I should give it a try, because if I didn't I would probably regret it later," Broecker recalled. "So I decided I should go for it."

Carlson told Broecker that her experience in local government — eight years as a member of the Vadnais Heights City Council — would be valuable in the Legislature. "That was all I needed," she said.

Broecker will keep her business going with some help from her sister and by "doing a lot of work on the weekends." She has told some of her corporate clients that they might have to wait a little longer for their framing jobs, and "they don't have a problem with that."

Broecker is enthusiastic about her opportunity at the Legislature to "make a difference" for her constituents in the northern St. Paul suburbs. Reflecting on her city council service, Broecker described herself as a "consensus builder" who tries to bring contending parties together to resolve disputes.

"I am pretty conservative," she allowed. "I

just feel that people need to be accountable for their actions." Likewise, Broecker said parents have to teach their children to be accountable, and impart moral values that include giving something back to the community.

As far as legislative priorities, Broecker succinctly declares, "People are fed up with taxes."

She wants to bring down taxes by holding the line on government spending. Broecker cited her experience putting together budgets for Vadnais Heights, where the tax portion of the city budget was "so frugal that we received zero local government aid" over the last five years. She said there are inequities in the current system, which give large amounts of aid to cities with less fiscal discipline.

Broecker and Rep. Harry Mares (IR-White Bear Lake) have sponsored a bill to eliminate unfunded state mandates for local school districts. She explained that some mandates from the Legislature force school districts to raise local property taxes. The bill specifies that a school district "need not comply" with a state program that does not fully fund a mandated program.

Other legislative concerns mentioned by Broecker include welfare reform, bringing down the cost of workers' compensation insurance to employers, and imposing term limits. Broecker said she will serve no more than three terms.

Before going into business for herself, Broecker worked at Burlington Northern for eight years. She is married with three teen-aged sons, who help define her recreational interests.

Broecker and her husband have been involved in a leadership program with a youth group at Grace Church in Roseville. She enjoys canoe trips in the Boundary Waters with the teenagers.

"I'm the only female who likes to fish and clean 'em and cook 'em," she explained, so on the canoe trips the boys awaken her at sunrise to go fishing. "The last time I caught a 10-pound northern," she boasted. Fishing talent runs in the family: A photograph on her desk shows her son holding a 24-pound, 46-inch tiger muskie he caught in Forest Lake.

When not out camping and hiking or downhill skiing, Broecker likes to relax and water ski at her family's cabin on Forest Lake. She also enjoys watercolor painting when time allows.

Broecker pledges to dedicate herself to legislative work as she has committed herself to other political and civic pursuits.

"Even though I don't have all the answers, I'm willing to listen and learn," she said.

— Mordecai Spektor

District 53B

Population: 33,153
Distribution: 98.45 percent urban;
1.55 percent rural
County: Ramsey
Largest city: Maplewood (portion)
Location: north Metro
Unemployment rate: 3.57 percent
Residents living below poverty level: 3.19 percent
1992 presidential election results:
Bush/Quayle 35.24 percent
Clinton/Gore 40.39 percent
Perot/Stockdale 23.59 percent
Other: 0.78 percent

Q & A

Q. With all the laws currently on the books, has the Legislature ever thought of deleting or revising current law before enacting more laws?

A. The Legislature regularly repeals laws. Ironically, however, it takes a new law to repeal an old law.

In 1994, the Legislature passed a new law repealing a slew of laws already on the books that outlined how much cities

and counties could levy in property taxes for such things as grasshopper control, Dutch Elm disease control, libraries, cemeteries, and municipal bands and orchestras.

The laws were repealed because the Legislature earlier passed another law that eliminated municipal property tax levy limits. At the time the Legislature did away with municipal levy limits, however, members did not take such items as grasshopper control limits off the books.

Another example occurred in 1993 when the Legislature, following a public outcry, repealed a controversial 1992 law that authorized a conference of chief judges to compile a list of misdemeanor offenses that would become petty misdemeanors. Petty misdemeanors are not considered crimes and the maximum fine is \$200. Misdemeanors are punishable by up to 90 days in jail and a \$700 fine.