

7/17/08

Tom! I thought you were dead and pleased to be wrong on that! Must be you are still in Lansing if you read the Journal. How are you? I'd sure like to get together some time.

Edith was in Washington state last I heard, and that was many years ago. I've tried to track her down through the Internet, but don't know what her last name is. I've remarried - well, a couple of times. Now married to Carol, living on the banks of the Grand River in northwest Lansing. Where are you?

Did you see the article in today's LSJ? Here is what it says:

Bauer challenger targets unions
68th District House rival Harry wants labor groups abolished

State Rep. Joan Bauer and Steve Harry are a bit like oil and vinegar politically. Harry, a retired procedures analyst living in west Lansing, thinks unions are destroying Michigan's economy. He wants to tax pensions, eliminate the sales tax, abolish the lottery and get rid of the state Senate. "I think the economy will take care of itself if we can do away with unions and fix the business tax," Harry, 65, said.

Bauer disagrees with Harry on all of the above, leading to Harry's bid to replace her.

The 68th District covers most of Lansing and Lansing Township. The winner of the Aug. 5 primary will face Republican David Irons, 54, of Lansing, in the Nov. 4 general election. State representatives are elected to two-year terms, up to a maximum of six years. Bauer is seeking a second term.

Successes, regrets

Bauer said among her biggest successes so far have been the passage of bills that gave the Accident Fund a tax credit to help them move into the old Ottawa Power Station, as well as land transfer deals to enable the eventual construction of the Capital Club Tower and a joint stadium for Eastern and Lansing Catholic high schools. "I would have thought that would be easy," she said. "You have to scream, yell, holler - I mean you really have to push." She said her biggest regret is that legislators failed to pass the 2007-08 budget on time, forcing a state shutdown and kicking campers out of state parks the night before bow-hunting season opened. If re-elected, Bauer said she will work to make sure that doesn't happen again.

Abortion rights support

Despite their differences, both Bauer and Harry support abortion rights for women and would seek to reverse a 2004 constitutional amendment that banned gay marriage. They also agreed that Michigan must find a way to increase funding for schools and roads. Harry would pay for it through a tax increase

while Bauer said she would designate part of the sales tax collected on gasoline for road and bridge repairs.

Bauer said she's taking Harry's campaign seriously, especially given what she calls an anti-incumbent sentiment fueled by last year's budget fiasco. "There really is a feeling of dissatisfaction with the Legislature, so it's important to me that people know their support is important to me and that I'm working for them," Bauer said. Even still, experts give a big edge to the incumbent.

Inside Michigan Politics Editor Bill Ballenger said Bauer should prevail in the August race. Democratic strategist Mark Grebner said Harry would be lucky to get just 20 percent of the vote. "He's probably right, but we'll see," Harry said of Grebner's prediction. "All I can do, I think, is present my ideas and see if they sail."