

Bound and determined

Hortman says issue, not the party is important

By **PATY JANOVEC**

Rep. Melissa Hortman (DFL-Brooklyn Park) insists on helping break the partisan gridlock that some say has plagued the Legislature over the past several sessions.



Rep. **Melissa Hortman**

Building relationships and not treating people as though they are in “two different camps can do it,” she said. “I will see people as people and not as Republicans and Democrats.” She said she would never vote down a bill simply because of the sponsor’s party.

Major issues in her district include transportation and education.

In the past few years the state hasn’t been funding road maintenance and construction enough, and is also declining in its commitment to public schools, she explained. “We want better schools and better roads.”

To help on the transportation issue, Hortman is a co-sponsor on Northstar commuter rail legislation. She said that the 35 sponsors come from both parties, an intentional united political voice.

A lawyer by profession, Hortman described her background as very similar to that of a legislator. “Our job is to take a wide variety of complicated information and simplify it and get to the heart of the issue, and propose a resolution.”

After unsuccessful House campaigns in 1998 and 2002, she was hesitant about trying a third time. “You’re really an absent parent and an absent spouse for about nine months.”

Hortman’s father encouraged her by saying, “You know there are going to be about 10 times in your life where it seems like opportunity knocks on your door, and you don’t want to look back and say that was one of the times that opportunity knocked and you didn’t answer the door.”

DISTRICT 47B

2002 Population: 36,543
Largest city: Brooklyn Park
Counties: Anoka, Hennepin
Top concern: School funding

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— Rep. Melissa Hortman

If that wasn’t enough to convince her, a quote in the newspaper from Wayne Gretzky helped. Gretzky said, “You miss 100 percent of the shots you don’t take.” When Sen. Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley) agreed to be her campaign manager, that sealed the deal.

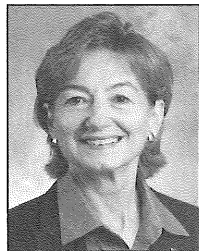
Hortman said she would rather spend time with her kids than do anything else. She said her kids know she is more like a “large child,” not a “real” grownup. For example, she can hold her own with the second grade Brownie troop she leads. “I’m right there with them talking about glitter makeup and smelly gel pens,” she added with a laugh.

Framing the issues

Scalze brings years of art and government experience to House

By **BRETT MARTIN**

The framed wildlife pictures in the office of Rep. Bev Scalze (DFL-Little Canada) brilliantly capture the Minnesota outdoors, but what’s really impressive is that Scalze painted them herself. One is of a brook trout that she created for the Department of Natural Resources’ 1991 trout and salmon habitat stamp.



Rep. **Bev Scalze**

“The brook trout is indicative of Minnesota,” Scalze said. “They only live in very cold, clean water.”

In addition to 25 years as a wildlife artist, Scalze brings to the House six terms on the Little Canada City Council, and experience as a small business owner — she and her

husband, Bob, own and operate a heating and air conditioning company. Her background is well-suited for the Environment and Natural Resources and Local Government committees on which she sits.

“I have firsthand knowledge of how state decisions impact local governments,” she said, noting that because of budget problems, the state often withheld local monies, forcing the city to build reserves by raising taxes. Her frustration with state government led her to seek a House seat.

“We need more local representatives in the House,” she said.

An advocate for public education, Scalze also wants to ensure that schools are adequately funded.

“My district has very good school systems, yet they’re struggling due to a lack of funds,” she said.

DISTRICT 54B

2002 Population: 36,759
Largest city: Roseville
County: Ramsey
Top concern: Education funding

“You do a lot of things for your kids, but you’d go to the wall for your grandkids. I want to leave them with something they can be proud of.”

— Rep. Bev Scalze

Health care is another issue she’d like to see addressed.

“The cost of health care impacts everything else,” she said. “We’re going to have to, at one point, negotiate these drug prices.”

Scalze said her legislative decisions are guided by how laws will impact her four granddaughters.

“You do a lot of things for your kids, but you’d go to the wall for your grandkids,” she said. “I want to leave them with something they can be proud of.”