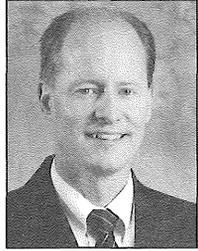


Strong family ties

The Gazelka family goes to St. Paul

By RUTH DUNN

When Rep. Paul Gazelka (R-Brainerd) came to St. Paul to begin his House term, his family came with him — not just for the day, but for the entire session. The family has settled into a rental house and the children are enrolled in new schools.



Rep. Paul Gazelka

It's an unusual step but one that works for this family that puts a premium on togetherness.

"We talked about how to stay together as a family with me in the Legislature," he said, "This idea got the thumbs up." Gazelka's family includes wife Maralee, and their children: Jessica, 18, Genna, 16, Emily, 13, Joshua, 11 and Lydia, 3.

Gazelka was urged to run for the House seat by former Rep. Dale Walz who decided

not to seek re-election. Gazelka defeated Don Samuelson, a DFLer who served in the House and Senate for 32 years, by 3.6 percent. Gazelka believes the district that once leaned DFL has changed in recent years so that his political beliefs more accurately reflect the area, especially when it comes to supporting social issues like defense of marriage and pro-life.

An insurance agent and manager for 22 years, Gazelka hopes the common sense he's gained from his business experience will be something he can contribute to the legislative process. He's been appointed vice chair of the House Commerce and Financial Institutions Committee and serves on the committee's Tourism Division. His other committees are Jobs and Economic Opportunity Policy and Finance, and Transportation.

Besides being a businessman, family man and legislator, Gazelka wrote a book, *Marketplace Ministers*, which arose from his interest in expressing Christian faith in the market-

2002 Population: 36,813

Largest city: Brainerd

County: Crow Wing

Top concerns: Economy, education and affordable health insurance

Gazelka authored a book, "Marketplace Ministers," which arose from his interest in expressing Christian faith in the marketplace.

place. He and his wife previously served as state directors of Marriage Ministry International, a non-denominational Christian organization.

Several members of the family were involved in a Brainerd theater projection of "The Sound of Music" last fall but Gazelka preferred being in the audience. "Politics has plenty of its own drama. I will play my part there."

Gazelka wants to be considered a statesman rather than a politician and believes he must maintain integrity and strive for excellence to achieve that goal.

Going the distance

Peppin hopes to be the 'new messenger' of change

By PATTY JANOVEC

Rep. Joyce Peppin (R-Rogers) has run four Twin Cities marathons and used the same determination skills to win her legislative seat.



Rep. Joyce Peppin

Gaining the Republican endorsement over former Rep. Arlon Lindner, Peppin said competition "keeps legislators fresh. ... I, and many other people, felt like we needed a new Re-

publican messenger ... to change hearts and minds." Lindner was caught up in controversy over statements made on the House floor last legislative session.

"The voters spoke and were ready for change," she added.

Peppin's background includes degrees in political science and speech communications from

the University of Minnesota-Duluth. "I was very interested in politics and worked for five different campaigns, and then I worked at the House in the Republican media department," she said. Following the political work, she became vice president of public relations for US Bank.

From her political experience, she became cognizant of the incredible amount of work that legislative staff does. "They make the legislator," Peppin said.

Her district remains very conservative, a characteristic she learned on the campaign trail.

The same things that were hard were also easy, including the amount of time it took to door knock. "Most days it was physically challenging, but it was also invigorating meeting people and learning about the district," she said.

Her key issues include: completing and expanding transportation in the district, fair funding for schools, and lifting the moratorium on new hospital construction to enable a

DISTRICT 32A

2002 Population: 36,561

Largest city: Maple Grove

Counties: Hennepin, Wright

Top concern: Hospital shortage in district

"The northwest suburbs are among the fastest growing in the metro area, and the need for a new hospital is a key quality of life issue."

— Rep. Joyce Peppin

facility to be built in Maple Grove. "The northwest suburbs are among the fastest growing in the metro area, and the need for a new hospital is a key quality of life issue," she said.

"People are trusting me to do this job, I have a lot of work to do," Peppin said. "Making sure, overall, that I'm reviewing budgets and making sure that taxpayers are getting the best return for their dollar."

She added, "When I was a child I learned how to ride the unicycle and juggle because I wanted to run away and join the circus, so I've changed my career goals considerably."