

Recount overturns coin toss tie breaker

■ Johns gets extra vote, beats Blash in Mt. Clemens race.

By Mitch Hotts
Macomb Daily Staff Writer

Jack Johns has experienced enough suspense to last a lifetime.

First there was an election night tie three weeks ago, followed by a losing flip of the coin and finally a recount Wednesday that resulted in Johns receiving a seat on the Mount Clemens City Commission.

"It definitely was worth the wait," Johns said at the Mount Clemens Community Center

after hearing the results of the recount.

Johns and fellow candidate Gary Blash both apparently received 806 votes in the Nov. 6 election as they battled for one of three vacant seats on the commission.

The following day, the Macomb County Clerk's Office conducted a tie-breaking coin toss, which Blash won.

Johns decided to seek a recount, which cost him \$10 per precinct — or \$90 for all precincts — although he can receive a refund since the move resulted in a change in the result.

The Macomb County Board

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Macomb Daily staff photo by Ray J. Skowronek

Overseeing the recounting process are Mayor Barb Dempsey, Kevin Kelly and Mary Jackson. Seated are Evelyn Shahope, recount clerk; and Patricia Bill and Doug Wozniak, both of the Macomb County Board of Canvassers.

RECOUNT: Canvassers today will check Sterling Heights votes

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of Canvassers went to work Wednesday afternoon, examining each ballot that was cast earlier this month. Each candidate was allowed to have a pair of observers at each of the three counting tables.

"I'm sure this is a little nerve-wracking for the candidates, since they both received the same number of votes," said Macomb County Clerk Carmella Sabaugh. "But the good thing is the hand count may determine how accurate the machine count was."

As it turned out, the canvassers found Johns received one more vote than Blash did, giving him 807 votes versus 806 for Blash.

"It is what it is," said Blash, 55, who retired after 30 years in the city assessor's office for Mount Clemens. "I'm not happy, but I will live to fight another day. Apparently God wants me to do something else and only He knows what that is."

The recount of approximately 1,480 votes also showed former Commissioner John Milkovich picked

up four votes, but not enough to move him out of last place. Losing candidate John Cody also picked up three votes, while Commissioner Karan Bates-Gasior and newly elected Commissioner Ron Campbell each picked up an additional vote.

Johns, 36, making his first run at public office, praised the work of city and county officials in conducting the recount. He said regardless of the outcome, he had planned to run again for the commission in the future despite the drama of the past few weeks.

"This was the most stressful thing I've gone through in a while," he said. "When I first heard Gary and I both had the same number of votes I felt sick. My nerves were just shot."

The county Board of Canvassers will repeat its recounting duties today for a Sterling Heights candidate.

John Spica, who finished seventh in a six-person race for City Council by 324 votes, has asked for a recount of approximately 7,500 absentee ballots, said Sterling Heights City Clerk Walter Blessed.