

**POLITICS:** City Council candidate comes bearing cookies. **5**

**NIGHTLIFE:** The place to be on St. Patty's Day? It was the Brownstone. **12**

# Elect Heidi Samuel to Columbus council

## Why? Because she sent me cookies

Heidi Samuel is a Republican running for Columbus City Council.

She's a wife and mom who lives on the East Side with her family. She once worked for the Ohio Department of Transportation, assisting in the early development of the I-670 cap. As a leader of the Eastmoor Civic Association, Samuel labored to resolve neighborhood flooding issues, close a motel that was a haven for prostitutes and drug users and take action against a crime-infested sex club.

I recently received a press release with these and other facts about Samuel in the mail. Normally, I would have given such a piece of paper to somebody else or, perhaps, simply tossed it in the office recycling bin so it could be born again as something more useful.

But this press release came rolled up in a little white bag that also contained three cookies. There was a chocolate chip cookie, a sugar cookie and an oatmeal raisin cookie, each separately wrapped.

As I devoured each delicious treat, two things occurred to me:

1. It would have been nice if Samuel had included a second chocolate chip instead of the oatmeal raisin one.

2. None of the other candidates for Columbus City Council have mailed me so much as a graham cracker.

True, the election is more than seven months away, but, as Samuel knows, it's never too soon for a candidate to start spelling out her positions on the issues facing Columbus.

For example, Samuel has taken a clear and strong position on the question of whether to send me free cookies in the mail. The other candidates have been ominously silent on that issue.

In fact, they're not taking it seriously at all. Aides to incumbent Democrats Charleta Tavares and Patsy Thomas seemed amused about Samuel's generosity.

"Heidi didn't send us any," said Kathy Owens, Thomas's legislative assistant.

Newly appointed Democrat Andy Ginther was only mildly impressed.

"Well, good for her," he said. "Did she make them herself?"

### Dan Williamson



Well, no. Samuels bought the cookies from a reputable company, Cheryl & Co. That's not to assume she wouldn't have fixed up a tasty batch herself, but why run the risk of overcooking the dough?

"If I cook for you," said Ginther, "I'm not sure that you'll ever write a nice thing about me."

Like the aides to Tavares and Thomas, Ginther seemed to find the issue a humorous one.

But we'll see if he's still laughing Nov. 6, when he's bounced off the council by a pro-cookie electorate.

Ginther, Tavares and Thomas are not the only candidates who have been out-classed by Samuel. City Council President Mike Mentel, a Democrat, and Republican challengers Paul Bingle, John Campbell and Larry Thomas have

also run cookie-free campaigns. They do so at their peril.

They're all running in an at-large field of eight candidates. Voters may choose up to four. Or they can cast just one vote, for Heidi Samuel.

That would send a strong message to the likes of Councilman Mentel, who's probably surrounded by boxes of cookies that he never shares.

Samuel herself said her gesture was intended to "make a personal connection."

"I know that candidates are usually a dime a dozen," she said. "I'm just trying to figure out how I can get a little attention and do things a little bit differently."

She's off to a good start, though she realizes she has now set the bar rather high for herself. "We'll see what I send next time," she said.

Right. Just remember to go easy on the oatmeal raisin.

**Samuel has taken a clear and strong position on the question of whether to send me free cookies in the mail. The other candidates have been ominously silent on that issue.**