

Technicality foils apparent win for perennial candidate

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WATERLOO

The third time wasn't the charm after all for Tracie Thomas Knight.

After two defeats in Waterloo City Council races, Knight, a fringe figure on the local political scene for the past three years, thought he had won elected office — to the Black Hawk County Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

Two commission seats were to be filled during the Nov. 5 election, but only one candidate, Arnold Harting of La Porte City, appeared on the ballot. He won reelection.

The other seat up for election was held by Teresa Schmitz of Jesup. Schmitz, who did not file nomination papers in time to make the ballot, received nine write-in votes, while Knight got 10.

However, it turns out that due to a quirk in Iowa law, which prevents soil and

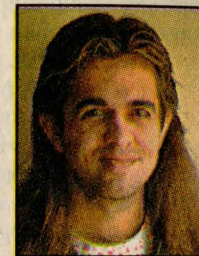
water conservation commissioners from residing in the same township, Knight won't be able to take the oath of office after all. His home at 401 Sullivan Ave. in Waterloo falls into Waterloo township, as does existing commissioner's Marv Haugebak, who lives at 2516 Ashland Ave. in Cedar Falls.

According to Iowa law, people who reside in the same township are prohibited from running for the commission office. However, because Knight ran as a

write-in candidate, the residency conflict was not discovered until post-election.

"This is no one's fault," said commissioner chair L. Jeannette Winegarden of Cedar Falls. Winegarden met with Black Hawk County Election Commissioner Kyle Jensson today to discuss the situation. They also called the Iowa Secretary of State's office for consultation on the matter.

Winegarden, who also chairs the Iowa
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Tracie Knight
Loses write-in bid
for county office

KNIGHT

Write-in winner ineligible for Soil, Water Commission

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Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, said the snafu will result in a vacancy.

The state soil conservation committee will appoint someone to the seat in December.

The outcome will be a disappointment to Knight, who has been known as Tracie Thomas. He changed his name in September when he got married.

In 1993, he founded the Community Involved Team of Youth (CITY), which was designed to encourage younger residents to participate in city politics, and opposes unchallenged races. He ran for city council on a ticket with a 19-year-old mayoral candidate. Both were defeated handily.

In 1995, Knight again challenged Waterloo City Council member Harold Getty, and again lost. In 1994 he started a campaign for the Black Hawk County Board of Supervisors, but dropped out to take a new job before nomination papers were due. He is now serving his second term on the Black Hawk County Republican Central Committee.

Knight said he considered running

for the county board of supervisors again this year, but decided to start out with a smaller office.

He ran an admittedly last-minute, write-in campaign for soil and water conservation commissioner. While he did not know much about the duties of a district commissioner prior to the election, "I catch on real quick," Knight said.

He added that as a member of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe tribe in Onamia, Minn., concern for conservation is part of his heritage.

"Soil and water conservation, preserving our natural resources, is something my tribe is working toward up in Minnesota. I believe this is something that will be positive for me, being a Native American," he said.

Soil and water commissioners are responsible for carrying out state and federal laws, which can involve input into the expenditure of significant sums of money.

Within their district boundaries, commissioners have say over conservation cost-sharing, revolving loan funds, water quality protection projects and resource enhancement and protection.

Commissioners also work with other local, state and federal government agencies.

Knight said he does plan on running for city council again, in 1997 or 1999.