

Sarisohn Quits Nomination Race

By Vicky Penner-Katz

What makes Floyd Sarisohn run?

Certainly not a Town Board election, twittered the maverick Commack attorney who yesterday scooped up the hat he had tossed into the ring six weeks ago in a move to become the Democratic Party's Town Board candidate.

"I guess I'm not ready to give up fighting the establishment," said Mr. Sarisohn, 51, in disclosing that he was withdrawing from the race to continue to pursue his legal career, one which frequently finds him at odds with Smithtown ordinances.

Mr. Sarisohn, a former District Court Judge who was bounced from the bench in a political dispute, and a former Town Leader, said he did "a lot of soul searching" over the past few weeks, his decision galvanized when the owner of Club Personal Touch in Commack sought him out for advice on what to do about a sign of a scantily

clad woman deemed offensive by some community members.

"Legally, he was absolutely correct. It was a question of fighting the Town or being a good neighbor, and as a practical matter, he took the sign down," said Mr. Sarisohn who takes credit for resolving the dispute.

It's not the first time Mr. Sarisohn has found himself representing an unpopular cause. Several years ago, he served as counsel to the owners of and dancers in topless bars here, helping to overturn Town ordinances which banned topless clubs in Smithtown. Eventually, the topless fad passed and with it most of the night spots that promoted adult entertainment.

Ironically, the topless issue had been brought to the attention of the Town Board by Clark Fisher, like Mr. Sarisohn, a former Town Democratic leader. Mr. Sarisohn acknowledged that sometimes his clients and causes can also embarrass the Democratic

Party; but, he says, the constitutional questions that have arisen from such legal disputes have to override personal decisions.

"Somebody's got to fight for these people," said Mr. Sarisohn who also admits to enjoying tweaking the noses of Town officials. "It's the challenging part of the legal business."

Smithtown Democrats will decide May 27 who will be on the ticket to face Republican-Conservative Ira Block.

Mr. Sarisohn's law partner, Joseph Infranco, is expected to pull out of the race, leaving the contest to former assistant Town Attorney Jerry Gariglio, community leader Bob Kubik, Judy Slotnick, a teacher who has run unsuccessfully for office twice before and Judy Pascucci, a former Nissequogue Village official. The Democrats will hold the special nominating convention at 8 p.m. at Harry's Yellow Balloon. The party's screening committee is expected to announce its selection tonight.

