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(Monitor Photo by Asher Kneeland)

## Elizabeth Smithers, Seated, Takes Car Registration As Clerk

# Gilmanton Woman Makes History

By ASHER KNEELAND

GILMANTON — Gilmanton's first woman selectman is also the first town clerk-selectman in the town's 118-year history.

Elizabeth E. Smithers, 44, elected selectman and reelected town clerk March 8, reported records showed she was a first in both categories.

She is the only person in the state holding both such jobs now, said officials of N.H. Municipal Association, who did not know how long since one person held both jobs in any town.

"Voters knew what they were doing in electing me," Mrs. Smithers said. "They know I'm here (in the town hall) three half-days a week — a selectman who is available."

With a grin, she acknowledged being the selectman available meant she will get most complaints.

"I've been thinking about tak-

ing on both jobs for some time. It was a matter of convenience. Providing the service and being here to answer questions seemed good sense," Mrs. Smithers said.

This year, nine-year veteran Howard Osler did not file for reelection as selectman. Three men and Mrs. Smithers did file.

Mrs. Smithers won with 368 votes, more than twice the 169 total for all three male contenders. She was also reelected without contest as town clerk, a job she has held 10 years.

David Bickford and David McKinna are the other two selectmen. After one selectmen's meeting, Mrs. Smithers reported no problems so far.

She added her once-a-week nighttime hours as town clerk are on Monday, the same night as selectmen's meeting.

"I hope there is not much conflict, I don't want to have to give

up any more evenings," she said.

Besides the Monday night hours, she is in the town office at the back of the town hall Monday and Wednesday mornings and Friday afternoons.

Doris P. Jones, treasurer and selectmen's assistant, is in the office Monday and Wednesday afternoons and Friday mornings.

Last Friday, Mrs. Smithers was doing her Friday town clerk hours at the end of her second week as selectman. She had been sworn in after town elections March 8.

In a little more than an hour, Mrs. Smithers — as town clerk — took three car registrations, answered one telephone call on registration and went over with Mrs. Jones some paper work.

As selectman, she told one telephone caller about a town-meeting warrant article and provided general information to another caller. She also was congratulated on her new job by two of three callers.

Mrs. Smithers is "selectman for the Gilmanton Center-Swan Lake area" of town. Originally, Gilmanton had one selectman representing each of the town's three sections.

The practice is continued nowadays in the selectman representing an area having charge of the blotter book (properties record) section covering his part of town.

"I don't think any voter would hesitate to take up any matter with any selectman now," Mrs. Smithers said, but admitted that McKinna's election last year was the first time a selectman from outside a section won that section's seat.

McKinna lives in the Iron Works but is selectman for lower Gilmanton-Shell Camp section. Bickford lives in and is selectman for the Iron Works section. Mrs. Smithers lives in Gilmanton Center.

Originally from Lexington, Mass., Mrs. Smithers has been a Gilmanton resident 16 years. She is married to Thomas Smithers, and the couple have four children.

In neighboring Barnstead, Leonard Tasker was elected both selectman and town treasurer this year, but could take only one job because state law forbids one person in both jobs. Tasker chose selectman and he and the other selectmen appointed a treasurer.

## WOMAN ELECTED SELECTMAN

Elizabeth Smithers was the first woman in the 250 year history of the town to be elected to the Board of Selectmen in Gilmanton. Mrs. Smithers won by a landslide vote of 368 to 73 for Edgar Stubbs, Jr. her closest opponent. Also running were Donald Blajda who polled 50 votes and William Fillion who polled 46.

Mrs. Smithers was also re-elected to the post of Town Clerk, which she has held for ten years. Doris Jones was re-elected to the post of Town Treasurer by a vote of 383 to 9 for her write-in opponent Doris Butman. Harry Foryth was re-elected Road Agent by a vote of 320 to 210 for John Bryant. Katherine Clairmont was elected Library Trustee and George Bingham was elected Trustee of the Trust Funds. All were unopposed and were for three year terms.