Taylor goes the distance



– TOM BRAID, Sun

Jim Taylor gets a victory kiss from his wife Barb Maxwell at his campaign headquarters last night.

Phair hangs on

By JONATHAN JENKINS
Staff Writer

Marathon man Jim Taylor ran the longest and the farthest in leading the polls in Ward 4, racing past incumbent Tooker Gomberg.

The 48-year-old wills and estate planner, who has run 17 marathons, was the first to declare in the campaign and tirelessly pounded the pavement.

"We planned it just like a marathon," Taylor said from his jubilant headquarters. "We set a schedule and we stuck to it every day.

"We started knocking on doors in May and there isn't another candidate who came close to us," he said.

"If I had broken my leg in the last month, there still wouldn't have been anyone close to us in door knocking."

Taylor said his first priority was getting the two referendum questions of the airport and Keillor Rd. settled.

"The people of Edmonton have told us they want two issues settled right away," he said.

"We have to resolve those two issues as soon as possible and then people will say, 'Hey, this council can get it done.' "

With Taylor collecting 8,250 votes, incumbent Michael Phair 7,809 and third-place finisher Terence Harding with 7,559, the result was in question all evening long.

"With so many candidates running, I knew no one would be a shoo-in."

Phair, whose background is in education, was first elected with Gomberg in 1992 when both collected more than 8,000 votes.

Harding, 45, a corporate consultant, ran a strong fourth in the 1992 race but could only improve one spot this time around.

With 17 candidates in the race for the inner-city ward, it was the most crowded ballot of the day.

Love him or hate him, Gomberg unfailingly provided headlines with his controversial style and aggressive pursuit of environmental and social causes.

Roundly touted as the incumbent most likely to lose, the image of a tie-less, bike-riding Gomberg was ingrained with supporters and detractors alike. He received 6,887 votes.

Fourth-place finisher Brian Bechtel, who got 6,959 votes, was left hanging until the very end.

"Initially I was just hoping to finish strong and be contending at the end," he said.

"To be so close, it's just so stressful, but it's exciting too."



Ward 4

Jim Taylor	8,531	15.95%
Michael Phair	8,031	15.01%
Terence Harding	7,809	14.60%
Brian Bechtel	7,157	13.38%
Tooker Gomberg	7,031	13.14%
Janice Fleming	4,441	8.30%
Sean Armstrong	2,863	5.35%
David C. Ward	1,949	3.64%
Helene Donahue	1,618	3.02%
Frank Louis Klemen	1,012	1.89%
Rod Foster	696	1.30%
Siu Wing Mak	620	1.16%
Total votes	**53,494**	