

## Metropolis CHAT ROOM



# What's So Funny About Peace, Housing and Running for City Council?

The 4th District cuts a strange swath through Los Angeles, connecting an electorate from Silver Lake to Studio City, Koreatown and the Miracle Mile to Los Feliz and North Hollywood. Following the death of City Councilman John Ferraro, a special election was called to fill his seat Sept. 11. Housing and L.A. Greens activist Denise Munro Robb, 39, has the distinction of being the sole candidate endorsed by Bonnie Raitt and the lone comedian in the race. We caught up with her at a press conference urging affordable housing for seniors. —HANK ROSENFELD

### What awakened your political consciousness?

Nuclear power. I was arrested at 12 years old protesting the San Onofre plant. I was hooked after that. Also, it was a great way to get away from my parents.

### Were they political?

Yes. My father was obsessively interested in helping other people. To the detriment of our family. We'd have all kinds of strangers and homeless people staying at our house and we were really poor. But my parents always taught me that it's important to share anything you have with those who don't. So now I share my problems with happy people.

### What are your major platform issues?

Neighborhood councils with real power, public transport, more bike lanes, parks and open space, saving all of the Ballona wet-

lands, nighttime City Council meetings with child care provided, a living wage, not a minimum wage... and free ice cream for everybody.

### Do you make fun of your opponents?

Now why would I do that?

### Has comedy helped prepare you for candidacy?

Well, it makes it a lot easier to debate nine other candidates in front of 200 people. If you haven't done it, it could be the scariest thing in the world. However, I love entertaining people while making them think. That's my greatest passion.

### Can humor hinder a candidate?

I have to try not to be too funny because people won't take you seriously. So if they laugh, I try to say something really depressing immediately afterward.

### What standup tricks can you use on the stump?

Know the audience. Notice when they're bored. Pause when they laugh. Listen. Ask questions. Get rid of hecklers as soon as possible. And make sure you get paid before the gig. Oh wait... not that one. Never mind.

### How did you get Ralph Nader's endorsement?

I'm hot. Ralph knows it. He's a sucker for a pretty face. You know what a wild man he is.

### And Bonnie Raitt's?

Same thing.