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A note to our readers:

Look for an insightful series of local stories and photos about "micropreemies" in Thursday's Observer.

Micropreemies are severely premature babies bearing medical odds thanks to advanced technology and specialized care. The series will feature profiles of families who have gone through the uncertainty of months in a neonatal intensive care unit, waiting for their newborn child to come home. We'll also discuss the sensitive, complex topic with those who know the most about it — doctors and nurses.

The series, titled "Micropreemies: Severely premature infants," was conceived and written by staff reporter Tim Smith, whose 11-month-old daughter Elizabeth was a micropreemie.

Robert Siles,
Managing Editor

Mayor hopefuls clash on issues



BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Hardly the Lincoln-Douglas debates; more like the runaway Zamboni debates. But like the more famous confrontation, Aldo Vagnozzi and Paul Sowerby have made their differences

clear since their opening debate at the Farmington Hills Activities Center Oct. 11.

And in their last televised debate sponsored by the Farmington Hills Council of Homeowners Wednesday night, the two could agree on little, right down to the pronunciation of

Vagnozzi's name.

Sowerby repeatedly called his opponent "Mister Vag-nah-z-i" instead of the common pronunciation of "Vag-noh-z-i."

The public safety proposal that would impose a separate 1-mill tax for the next 10 years was a case in point. Vagnozzi supports the millage. Sowerby has said he neither supports

or opposes the tax, but has continually branded his opponent as a "tax and spend liberal" for supporting the public safety millage and other taxes. "We've got to protect our seniors from higher taxes," said Sowerby,

Candidates debate, 2A

who chastised Vagnozzi for his support of previous millages, including the SMART and OCC millages. Vagnozzi took a page from an unlikely source, former President Ronald Reagan.

"There you go again," he said of Sowerby. "This is a local election, based on local issues."

Vagnozzi criticized Sowerby's support by several Republicans, includ-

See CLASS, 2A

IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Ball's pitched: Organizers are preparing for the inaugural Cornucopia Ball Nov. 11 at the Farmington Hills Activities Center. /3A

Court docket: A Detroit man, 22, charged in the hit-and-run death of a Farmington Hills boy, 13, was arraigned in Oakland County Circuit Court Friday. /3A

OPINION

Penned views: Several people offer opinions ranging from the Farmington Hills Public Safety millage proposal to public education. /10A

TASTE

Michigan apples: Joan Boram offers 50 nifty ideas for things to do with apples. /1B

Taste Buds: Believe it or not, some foods taste better without salt. /1B

LOTTERY

The Lotto jackpot was worth at least \$3.6 million. The Michigan lottery numbers for Saturday, Oct. 21, are:

■ DAILY 3:
128

■ DAILY 4:
0311

■ LOTTO: 4, 16, 19, 37, 38, 39

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A fix-it fellow



BRANDON LAMBLETT/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Reclamation projects: Donald Ortwine, who has lived in Farmington Hills the last 73 of his 78 years, now spends his retirement repairing bikes and lawn mowers, and selling them in front of his house.

'Spokes' man: Hills resident recycles bicycles

BY MARY ROOSEKUP
STAFF WRITER

Many know Donald Ortwine simply as the bike man of Farmington Hills.

From the little shed behind his home on Farmington Road, north of 12 Mile, Ortwine repairs old bicycles.

"The dealers don't want them. If I can, I'll gladly fix 'em," said

Ortwine, who has lived on the same land for 78 of his 78 years.

His wife of almost 50 years, Elizabeth, says fixing bikes has been a wonderful hobby for her husband.

"It's been healthy for him rather than sitting on the couch and watching TV," she said.

The hobby began innocently enough. After Ortwine retired from Pontiac Motors in 1966, his children

begin bringing him things to fix.

"He had always been good at fixing bikes. With three boys, you have to be," said Elizabeth.

The couple also have a daughter. "The couple also have a daughter. The couple also have a daughter."

Ortwine repairs the bicycles with recycled parts and sells them cheap. One mom recently picked up a tricy-

cle for \$3. His customers have included friends, neighbors — even the Farmington chief of police, who bought some scooters.

"Someone will be driving by and yell, 'Are you the bike man?'" said Ortwine, who doesn't mind the nickname.

Over time, word spread. Even the

See BICYCLES, 2A



Vagnozzi walks while running for office

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

In an era where politicians labor under a cynical public, Aldo Vagnozzi reveals in his chosen vocation.

At 70, he's running to become Farmington Hills' first elected mayor and seems to love every minute. "I have the ability to get along with people," he says beaming, "especially residents."

The World War II veteran will have likely visited about 7,500 homes in the city during his door-to-door cam-

■ MAYOR'S RACE

paign, more than any of his previous campaigns, successful and otherwise.

"I want to restore faith in the (Farmington Hills City) Council," he says. "We haven't had much leadership in the last two years."

Vagnozzi, a semi-retired writer and editor who still consults for the AFL-CIO, said one of his assets is a sense of humor, something that was in short supply during the controversial

Timbercrest negotiations that spurred a recall campaign against his six fellow council members.

Although he was an initially reluctant supporter of having a directly elected mayor, the father of four said his experience as mayor in 1991, for the wake of an often divided council, was a preview of how he'll respond if elected to the post.

"I was a conciliator and kept the

See VAGNOZZI, 2A

Boomerang balloons

Susan Richards and her husband Charles had a great time at their son Adam's birthday Oct. 14.

They celebrated at the Elks Club near 10 Mile and Orchard Lake. Charles Richards tried to combine the balloons from the event and put them in the car trunk, but was unsuccessful and had to watch them go skyward.

"So I was talking to a good friend Sunday on the phone, and I looked out my window (in the Northwestern Highway at Middlebelt area) and saw the balloons in my tree," Susan Richards said. "I couldn't believe it. The wind hadn't knocked them out of the tree, and they had come a long way right to our yard."

"I still have this really good feeling about it," she said.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

A mother's day

Michigan Association of American Mothers Inc. will honor 1995 state Mother of the Year Lynn Keenan and 1995 Mother of Young Children Michelle Engler at a luncheon Saturday, Oct. 28, at the Clendon Hotel, 12 Mile Road, west of Orchard Lake, Farmington Hills.

Lynn Romney Keenan is the daughter of former Michigan governor George Romney and his wife Lenora. She is married to attorney Loren Keenan, and they have eight children and 21 grandchildren. Michelle Engler is married to Gov. John Engler and gave birth to triplets last year. AMI is a

national organization dedicated to honoring mothers and strengthening the moral and spiritual foundations of the family and home.

Pumpkin Picasos

Round and ripe pumpkins will receive a complete make-over from kids as McFarland Florist in Farmington Hills conducts its Third Annual Halloween Pumpkin Painting event at 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 28. McFarland's artist in residence, Lisa Hicks, offers kids of all ages the hands-on opportunity to create and paint personalized Halloween pumpkins. A materials fee of \$3 — paid in advance — covers instruction, pumpkins, painting supplies and goodies for the participants. McFarland Florist and Greenhouse is at 32915 Grand River, four blocks east of Middlebelt Road, Farmington Hills. To register, call 474-0780.