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THE **Observer & Excentric**
NEWSPAPERS

Council candidates seem to be on same page

BY BILL COULTANT
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills City Council candidates had a chance to show off their impressive records of community service and their speaking skills at the Council of Homeowners televised debate Oct. 18.

It was the final televised evening debate before the Nov. 7 election, when voters will send three of the five to the city council. Candidate and former councilman Ben Marks was unable to attend.

But after two other televised debate forums and a forum before senior citizens, the four had little trouble fielding audience, phone-in and panel questions.

The candidates seemed to be in agreement on most issues. Nancy Bates said traffic is the city's biggest problem. Despite receiving \$3.5 million in road mon-

ey from the state since 1994, there will still be room for improvement.

"As soon as 12 Mile (boulevard) is completed, we need a citywide traffic study," Bates said. "There are a lot of things we can do. I think it depends on what you want the city to look like."

Dennis Fitzgerald said with the lessening amounts of local and other tax revenues coming in, the city needs to look at other sources of funding.

"I think we need to look at creative ideas, possibly user fees," said the financial planner. "We could look into memberships at the (San Marino) golf course."

Terry Sever and Vicki Barnett agreed that quality of life concerns, including traffic, should be the council's priority.

"Protecting what we have is important," said Sever, adding that

passing a public safety tax would help the city maintain its high quality of life and hold down crime.

Barnett stressed a regional approach to traffic because so much of it passes through Farmington Hills to other cities.

"If we can't move cars through our city, it hurts residents," she said. "It's no good to encourage development on Orchard Lake if it dead ends."

The candidates were unanimous in their support of the public safety millage that would put more officers on patrol and short-

en firefighter response times. Sever compared Farmington Hills and Southfield, which have similar populations, but spend differently on public safety. Southfield spends about \$10 million more than does Farmington Hills.

Three of the four candidates said they supported Aldo Vagnozzi for mayor. Fitzgerald said he was supporting Paul Sowerby so that both Sowerby (as mayor) and Vagnozzi (who would retain his council seat for another two years) would be serving with him.

The candidates also agreed that redevelopment should be a priority.

Barnett said the rezoning of North Power Road to a less dense use that reflected its rural atmosphere could be accomplished in other areas of the city.

Bates said with the city 93 percent developed, and with less than half of the remaining developable land, redevelopment and "fighting blight," as the city is doing on the Grand River corridor, are the right direction. The candidates will debate this morning at Farmington High School.

Clash from page 1A

ing U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg and Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson, who are not residents and can't vote in the election.

Sowerby countered that Vagnozzi, with the support of union political action committees, was getting help from outside sources as well.

"Unions have outlived their usefulness," Sowerby said.

Vagnozzi countered that most of the city's employees were unionized.

Sowerby said although he had opposed a directly elected mayor for Farmington Hills, he had decided to run when he saw the council decide to buy a second Zamboni machine for the ice arena, rather than save the additional expense.

Vagnozzi said if one of the machines broke down or needed service, it would be more cost effective to have another in service than to lose ice rental money or hurt money-making programs by canceling them.

The candidates differed sharply on two issues, in which they argued not to agree on the facts.

Sowerby said he had voted for a controversial IRO (industrial research office) zoning, which was the established zoning at the time on property on Drake while he was a council member in 1989.

Vagnozzi said he was "flabbergasted" that Sowerby was "so ignorant of the facts," since he had been part of that issue.

"It was not zoned IRO," Vagnozzi said. "That's why they came

in for a zoning change."

The two also argued over Sowerby's position on the public safety proposal. Vagnozzi said he has consistently supported the tax while Sowerby has slipped.

Sowerby said he has never supported the proposal or opposed it.

"I support the fire and police," he said. "But do we need another tax? I'm not opposed. On Nov. 7, I'll make my decision like everyone else."

Bicycles from page 1A

couple's church, Orchard Methodist Church, on Farmington Road, has been a drop-off point for broken bikes for the bike man to fix.

"The bike shops charge \$25 or \$30 just to look for the problem," he said, noting that in many cases, it's not worth the expense.

One popular market for cheap used bikes is the college crowd.

"Who wants to take an expensive bike up to school?" asked Eleanora. "Our son had a bike stolen while he was in college. He went somewhere and left it on the front porch. I guess the temptation was too great."

Ortwine calls his meager earnings "pin money." But it still beats the 5 cents per bushel he got paid for picking potatoes on

nearby farms as a young man.


"He never had anything handed to him. He's worked for everything he's got," said Eleanora. "He's a fair man."

Ortwine grew up in the house next door to his current home, on a six-acre spread "with a cow, pigs, chickens and plenty of vegetables. My dad peddled vegeta-

bles in Farmington from his Model T."

He and Eleanor built their current home a year after they married and still remember 13 Mile as a dirt road with a big tree in the center which locals used as a marker for the mile road.

"It was very nice and peaceful," said Eleanor.



Dentistry in the 90s

by Herbert M. Gardner, D.D.S. & Martha P. Zinderman, R.N., D.D.S.

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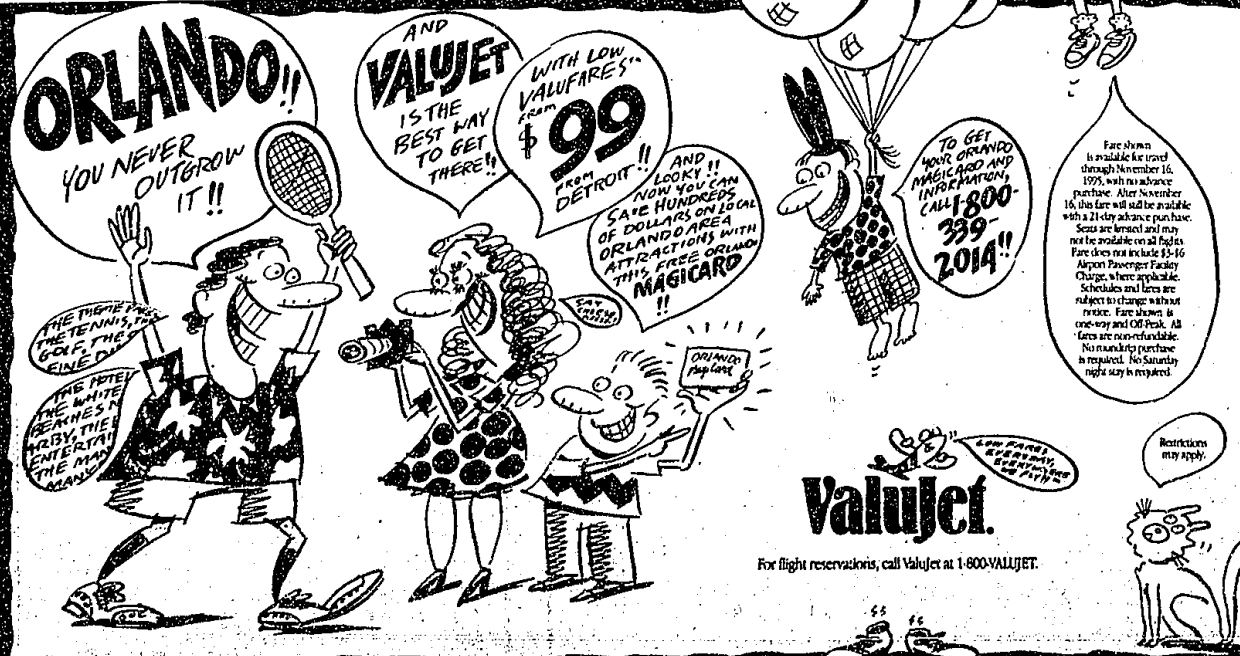
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