

Hills

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Walking shoes

Vagnozzi said he thought he would win a four-year term during an election night get-together at the Botsford Inn. Vagnozzi walked more in this campaign than any previous one, visiting 5,000 homes and losing 15 pounds.

"As far as I'm concerned, he's the best man on the council," said longtime supporter Abe Aon.

Many Vagnozzi supporters also worked for Oliverio.

"Aldo, Cheryl and Jon," said Massie Kurzeja, an Okla. Town activist. "Those are the three I'd stomp for."

At the Grant camp, at the San Marino Clubhouse, campaign workers were more at ease than the candidate.

"The difference between first and fourth place is just 250 votes (at about 10:30 p.m. Tuesday)," said longtime friend and supporter Kent Nickol. "I think Jon has run his campaign the way he wanted to."

But Oliverio's strong showing did not go unnoticed among

Grant supporters.

"I think she worked hard and it showed," said Bob Plummer, president of the community library board and a Grant supporter.

"I don't want to do this in two years," Grant said, noting that he was precariously close to a fourth-place finish. (He beat fourth-place finisher Larry Lichtman by just 100 votes.) "I like what I do for the city, but I don't really like running a campaign."

Ben Marks is out

Although their battle for the third spot, and a four-year term, was close, the top four candidates were well ahead of councilman Ben Marks, who fell 1,000 votes short of the last spot, taken by Lichtman.

"My feeling is that if people understand Ben and what he has done for this city, he'll do all right," said councilwoman Joanne Smith during Marks' campaign party at Gino's restaurant. "No one has worked as hard for the city as he has."

Ken Perrin, a longtime friend, former school board member and co-founder with Marks of the Farmington Hills Council of Homeowners, said he hoped his candidate's qualities of honesty would win the day.

"He (Marks) is a very honest, forthright person," Perrin said.

But it wasn't to be. And Marks, who has served the city in many capacities and won praise for his recent service as Michigan Municipal League president, was philosophical about his chances.

"I think there is the gender issue," he said of Oliverio's strong showing. "But after you've been around like I have, you learn to accept things. What will be, will be."

Lichtman, who had been optimistic about winning a four-year term during his election night party at his Plumbrook home, said he was happy with his showing and was relieved that the campaign is over.

"I think the emery boards (given out by the Grant campaign) were the difference," he quipped Wednesday morning. "It was close for third place (160 votes) and I was re-elected by a comfortable margin (1,000 votes)."

No hand-wringing

Lichtman, who will be serving his third two-year term's end although he had hoped for a four-year term, he didn't mind being a congressman (two years) among senators (four years).

"I'm not wringing my hands over a two-year term," he said. "I'm not second guessing anything. I'm glad it's over and I'm anxious to get going."

Challenger Vincent Lorelli, who finished last with 3,039 votes (2,319 behind Marks), said he was happy with his showing considering his late entry into the race.

"I wish I had decided to enter earlier," said the attorney. "I didn't enter until August. Next



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LEMMON

Election night: Jon Grant is interviewed by Jody Soronen midway through the returns.

time, I would plan it better."

Mayor Nancy Bates said the good thing about the Farmington Hills City Council is that there will be no lame duck members.

"One thing about Farmington Hills is that we elect 'em and swear them in at the next meeting," she said.

The four winners will be sworn in Monday.

City clerk Kathy Dorman said she was surprised by the turnout of 20 percent, which is relatively high for a council-only election.

"When we've had just council candidates running, it's been 15-17-18 percent," she said.

Of 51,618 registered voters, there were 10,498 votes cast, which is just over 20 percent. Absentee voters were a big factor, with about 5,600 votes, or 53 percent of the vote.

Oliverio's support spans precincts

Just over 20 percent of registered voters in Farmington Hills cast ballots in Tuesday's city council race. Out of 51,618 registered, 10,498 voted with about 5,600 absentee ballots counted.

Voters could select up to four of the six candidates on the ballot.

The top three finishers won four-year seats and the fourth-place finisher won a two-year term.

Challenger Cheryl Oliverio finished first with 7,178 votes (on 68 percent of ballots cast). Aldo Vagnozzi finished second with 7,083

(67 percent). Jon Grant finished third with 6,618 (63 percent) and Larry Lichtman finished fourth with 6,458 votes (62 percent).

Incumbent Ben Marks did not win re-election, getting 5,458 votes (52 percent) and challenger Vincent Lorelli finished last with 3,039 votes (29 percent).

Oliverio's support was widespread. She did not finish lower than fourth in any precinct. Oliverio finished first in 14 of 31 precincts, second in 10 precincts, third in six precincts and fourth in only one precinct.



Waiting, watching: Aldo Vagnozzi watches for totals on cable with his family and supporters.



Anxious moments: Dick Tupper, in the SWOCC studio, looks at results with his wife, Donna, and Andrew Campbell, 14, son of councilman Arnie Campbell.

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have their names taken off the ballot.

Russell Buyers, who unofficially pulled out a week before the election for personal reasons, received 212 votes. Tom Lyczkowski, who withdrew in August because of business commitments, picked up 142 votes.

"I had a suspicion Tom and Russ would play a role in this," said Bush, who won three precincts. "I never believed it would be like this."

"With Tom and Russ withdrawing, what concerned me is what happened: They took votes."

Tupper, who won Precincts 1 and 3, was rather anguine.

"At least it doesn't make a difference whether we get a seat or not," Tupper said, "but how long we get to stay in the seat."

"It certainly is not the way I wanted it to finish."

Bush, Campbell and Tupper waited in city hall as city manager Frank Lauboff and city clerk Patsy Cantrell pored over the city charter. No provision addresses ties in city elections.

The successful candidates then went their separate ways.

"Frank and I thought about this happening," Cantrell said. "We said, 'No chance.'"

Lost in the hubbub was Campbell's strong performance. He collected a whopping 175 votes in Precinct 4, which includes Farmington Meadows subdivision where he lives.

"That's my home district," Campbell said. "That's what made the difference."

Campbell also rang up 197 absentee votes, tops among the five candidates. As late as 7 p.m. Tuesday, he could be seen wearing a hooded parka greeting what few voters there were outside of the precincts.

He also mounted a strong door-to-door campaign. Neighbors in Farmington Meadows were at polling stations passing out literature.

"I had a reaction from some people. Why are you out here today? It's three candidates for three seats," Campbell said. "But it does matter."

Bush and Tupper would likely agree.

Bush fared well against two well-known incumbents. She pitched signs and mounted a door-to-door campaign despite battling pneumonia down the stretch. After the initial shock of the tie, Bush was quite happy with the outcome at her victory celebration at Heene-Sundquist Funeral Home.

She would be especially happy if it results in a four-year term. "Sure I would," Bush said. "I ran because I was committed and I wanted a four-year term."

Tupper was the last candidate to put up signs and promptly took them down at noon Tuesday. He also didn't go door to door.

He credited both Bush and Campbell for running strong campaigns and added: "A low turnout is always adverse to an incumbent."

Sparse turnout was evident at

many precincts, no doubt affected by the withdrawal of Buyers last week.

Precinct 5 at Longacre Elementary had 232 turn out, 173 of whom voted for Bush. Only 97 of 1,991 registered voted cast ballots in Precinct 3 at Farmington High, which was won by Tupper with 85 votes.

Election workers said they couldn't tell voters not to cast ballots for the two candidates who pulled out.

"We show up, shut up and wear beige," said Elenor Peterson, chairwoman of Precinct 5. "That's what election workers are told to do."

Added Precinct 4 election official Marie Hans: "I don't think some of the people who came into vote even knew that (two candidates dropped out). Something is wrong with this election."

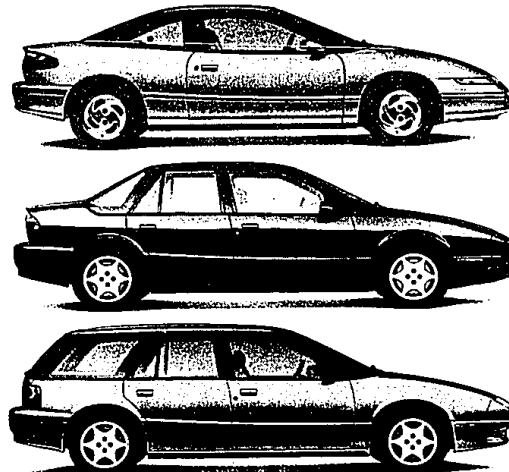
The fact there were three active candidates for three seats didn't deter people like Rick Kristoff from voting, though. He was the 100th voter in Precinct 6 at 10 Mile Community School.

"I really wanted to vote for the guys I wanted to see get in," said Kristoff, who received a piece of buttered candy from an election worker.

Cathy Kwasky, who had just voted at Precinct 1 at city hall, felt the same way.

"It probably affects (the election)," Kwasky said. "It almost makes you feel like 'Why vote?'"

"Also, it makes you feel like they are playing some type of game."



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