

OUR VIEWS

Vagnozzi's style best suits 37th District

In the battle for the 37th House District seat vacated by term-limited Republican Andrew Raczowski, voters have a clear choice.

Republican Valerie Knol is 32, more experienced in business than politics and holds decidedly conservative views. Liberal Democrat Aldo Vagnozzi, 77, has decades of local government experience and retired as a union man.

But this race isn't about simple political differences. It's a question of character, ethical behavior and the challenges that come with being part of a large freshman class created by term limits. We believe Aldo Vagnozzi is best suited for the task.

Yes, he'll be nearly 80 when his term is up. And we challenge anyone who believes he's too old to try keeping up with him for a day.

Because of his maturity and experience, Vagnozzi will bring to Lansing an institutional wisdom and a valuable local government perspective. He has a long history of ethical campaigning, which will serve him well as lobbyists descend on Lansing, snuffing fresh blood.

We can't say the same for Knol. In her very first pitch for ANY political office, she used last minute smear tactics, telling voters that Republican primary opponent Terry Sever owed Oakland County back taxes - which came as news to Sever, who refinanced his home this spring to pay that bill.

It's bad enough that Knol didn't bother to thoroughly research this "bombshell" before dropping it. But when she learned her literature wasn't accurate, Knol blamed Oakland County for providing faulty information. She has never publicly apologized for maligning Sever and misinforming voters. We believe her continued silence on this issue speaks volumes.

Demonstrated character, commitment to ethical politics and to the cities he'll serve give Aldo Vagnozzi the edge in this race, and we urge 37th District voters to support him on Nov. 5.

3 of 4 state ballot proposals not needed

Voters will help decide the fate Nov. 5 of four statewide ballot proposals that affect how we vote, pay for water and sewer improvements, treat state employees and spend Michigan's share of the tobacco settlement.

The Observer & Eccentric offers the following endorsements on the ballot proposals.

Proposal 1 - If approved, would amend Michigan election laws to eliminate straight-party voting in partisan general elections; provide penalties for stealing campaign signs or accepting payment for campaign work while being paid as a public employee to perform election duties; and tighten other election-related rules as set forth by the Secretary of State's office. For those who read the ballot language it may be confusing. You have to vote "No" on Proposal 1 in order to preserve Michigan's tradition of allowing straight ticket voting. At a time when the percentage of registered voters casting ballots rarely exceeds 50 percent, we see no reason to eliminate a voting option. We urge a no vote on Proposal 1.

Proposal 2 - Gives the state of Michigan authority to issue up to \$1 billion in general obligation bonds to improve the quality of the waters of the state by financing sewage treatment works projects, storm water projects and water pollution projects through low interest loans to governmental units. The proposal would provide for repayment of the bonds from the state general fund. Meeting federal clean water mandates continues to be a major issue for local communities, and any help from the state in the way of low-interest loans to pay for the mandates is a plus. Voters should support Proposal 2 with a yes vote on Nov. 5.

Proposal 3 - State civil service employees, who are prohibited from striking, would be given a constitutional guarantee of binding arbitration to break impasses over job conditions and wages if the proposal is approved. Under this proposal, neither the Michigan Legislature nor the Civil Service Commission will be allowed to review pay increases, eliminating the system of checks and balances. We see no compelling reason for changing the existing process and urge a no vote on Proposal 3.

Proposal 4 - This proposed constitutional amendment would mandate that 90 percent of the state's annual tobacco settlement would be allocated to nonprofit hospitals, licensed nursing homes, hospices and the Healthy Michigan Foundation, along with paying for smoking cessation and prevention programs. The money would automatically go to these groups and the Legislature and Governor would have no control over how it is spent. Voters should say no on Proposal 4.

FARMINGTON Observer

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PAUL WURSHMANN/OBSERVER

Margaret Birney, behind counter, works the counter at Farmington Cider Mill in Northville. Since November of 2000, the mill has been required by law to pass all of its filled cider bottles through a UV light pasteurizing process, to ensure product safety. Some customers and mill owners aren't happy about it, because the process changes the taste slightly.

LETTERS

Campaign beauty

With the onset of another political season, many candidates will be erecting banners and lawn signs in hopes of catching the public's eye.

While the Beautification Commission applauds the efforts of all candidates who run for public office and acknowledge lawn signs as a fundamental right of free speech, these signs can easily become an eyesore in our neighborhoods and detract from the very beauty that makes Farmington Hills a great community to represent.

With regards to lawn signs, Farmington Hills relies primarily on self-policing. Signs must be on private property and they can't block a driver's view of traffic, but any more than that and candidates are mostly on their own.

The Beautification Commission would like to remind candidates that maintaining a beautiful and clutter-free community is a coordinated and cooperative effort.

We want you to display your name and message in as many places as possible but we ask you to be mindful of where your signs are and how they look. And when the campaign's over we hope you'll take them down as quickly as you put them up.

We wish all the candidates the best of luck and we look forward to a successful campaign season.

Jan Hunt, Chairperson

Farmington Hills Beautification Commission

Nasty campaign

Among my many blessings in life, I have never met the nasty Tom Murphy whose lengthy, anti-Vagnozzi diatribe on your Opinion Page of Sept. 26 represents the worst elements of the Knol Campaign. "Ignore the issues and smear the opposition!"

Murphy's lack of civility in attacking Aldo Vagnozzi typifies Knol's politics. If you have nothing to offer, attack your opponent's character.

Farmington/Farmington Hills' voters won't be fooled by Ms. Knol's tactics. Come November she'll see how mistaken she is.

Dan Greenberg
Farmington Hills

Free speech

I am truly disturbed by (Farmington Hills) Council's opinion that certain groups should be excluded from use of our public facilities based solely on an innocuous political endorsement.

Public facilities are built for the use of the public and community groups should be allowed to rent these facilities in order to further the development of the community at large. To deny access to public facilities based on socioeconomic or political opinion or affiliation is against public policy.

Free speech should govern what our local groups do and say. In essence, our Council has stated that only groups who merely sit back and don't make any mention of politics can use our public facilities.

This and other instances should not be construed as political pandemonium, but simply a recognition of someone who may be looking out for the well-being of the community. To deny the use of our public facilities based on this endorsement is unconstitutional and is an out-

rage. The City should encourage the use of city facilities by the many organizations in this community. Admittedly, there may be a fear that use of our public facilities by groups that go against the social fiber will be a form of transferred endorsement by the City. However, these fears can be alleviated without the needless line drawn at political affiliation in general.

It is apparent that lines need to be drawn and citizens need to be protected from some groups that may seek to use public facilities. It is, however, important to realize that an civic organization's political endorsement is not the place to draw the line. Such arbitrary line drawing is not for the benefit or the protection of this community in any way.

Timothy L. Prochko, Esq.
Farmington Hills

Soccer issue

Just recently, a group of high school-age girls from Farmington Hills spent their afternoon playing soccer with another group of girls from Ferndale. The team from Ferndale was sponsored by the Farmington Soccer Club. The team from Farmington Hills was refused by the Farmington Soccer Club the opportunity to play in Farmington Hills.

How could that be, you ask? On no less than five separate occasions during late spring and early summer, I contacted Kim Wong of the Farmington Soccer Club, advising that I have a returning group of girls, all Farmington Hills residents, all interested in playing in the Great Lakes Open Division as they have for the past several years. I was informed by Kim Wong that the Club was already set for both travel teams and coaches and therefore would not accept this returning Farmington team.

I reminded Ms. Wong that I was the incumbent coach for this age group in this Division. Ms. Wong stated that the Club appreciated my offer to coach a travel team, however, the Club was set.

With the FSC unwilling to sponsor a returning team of 18 Farmington Hills residents, the team was forced to find another soccer club willing to sponsor the girls. Fortunately, we found a friendly neighbor in West Bloomfield through the Lakes Area Youth Soccer Club.

The FSC website indicates that the Club includes representatives from both City and School officials. I wonder if the City representative is aware that an entire team of tax-paying residents were forced to go to West Bloomfield to play soccer.

As the Club's new motto states "Give us a try. Play in Farmington." If only the Club would pay attention to its own motto.

Ed Hogan
Farmington Hills

Scurrilous letter

This is in response to the scurrilous letter in the Sept. 26 Observer signed Marie Morgan.

As noted elsewhere in the same Observer, Cardinal Maida came to Our Lady of Sorrows to help us celebrate our 75th Anniversary as a parish by presiding at Mass. Nothing fiscal involved. All donations to the Cathedral and the Washington Museum were strictly voluntary. No one has been coerced into contributing to either. A lot of Catholics are

pleased to do so.

We did not go to the public school for help in anything. We are merely trying something that would be beneficial to both school systems. Funds for them and an increased curriculum for us. I fail to see anything sinister in that.

Nothing that I or any other Catholic has done, so far as I can ascertain, has been to glorify the hierarchy. We are grateful that we have a beautiful place to worship God.

Also, funds for defending any priest come from insurance premiums - not your pocketbook.

Neil Young
Farmington

Candidate's views

I am the Democratic candidate for the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, in the 15th District. I believe America's greatness lies in our belief in fairness and our ability to change as time and circumstances demand.

As I walk my district I find that when the issues are explained in their proper context, most involved voters agree with me.

If we don't respect all our citizens and look to the future needs of our county now, we will regret it in the long run.

Recently the Republican dominated Commission voted, along party lines, to end the family planning program in Oakland County.

This foolishly shortsighted vote ends a program proven to lower the rates of unwanted pregnancy, low birth-weight babies, infant mortality and abortion. This cut unfairly affects our low-income and minority communities and will cost the county more in future health costs.

Disgracefully, the above budget cuts affect those with the least power in our political system. They suffer so we can balance our budgets because most voters won't be affected, so they won't notice. This sort of irresponsibility gives "politics" a bad name.

We need a regional growth management plan, to insure all our communities have an equal voice in the future growth of our area. Protecting our public water supply is also vitally important to our health.

Let's treat all our citizens fairly, regardless of their political power, and prepare for the future before it passes us by.

Jim Nash
Farmington Hills

SHARE YOUR OPINIONS

We welcome your letters to the editor. Please include your name, address and phone number for verification. We ask that your letters be 400 words or less. We may edit for clarity, space and content.

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QUOTABLE

They're taking themselves out for a walk.

Country Oaks homeowner Mary Rompne, on dogs running loose; she and her neighbors would like to see a leash law.