

LANDSCAPES  
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tee. Nominees were judged on uniqueness, maintenance, curb appeal and design. Landscape as well as the building or home were taken into consideration in the selection process.

The Santonis have been married 61 years and have lived in Farmington 31 years.

"Instead of Vic Tanny, we do this," Joe Santoni said of the work involved in maintaining their environmental work of art.

Highlights of the Santonis' award-winning entry on Smithfield in Farmington include a variety of trees, three large mounds covered with red lava rocks.

One residential winner was chosen from each of Farmington's six voting precincts. Other design winners included Ken and Linda Chlars, Precinct 1; Michael and Susan Burns, Precinct 2; Janet McIntosh, Precinct 3; William and Karen Campbell, Precinct 4; David and Karen Albrecht, Precinct 5; and Joseph and Georgia Santoni, Precinct 6.

Business winners were Three Oaks Furniture, 33021 Grand River; Mobil, 33330 Elgite Mile and Lakritz-Weber Adventures, on Grand River. Other awarded businesses were Fresh Approach, 33243 Grand River, which received Mayor's Trophy honors, and Village Hidden Treasures & Village Clippers Salon, 33245



BEA HESLER/OBSERVER  
Fresh Approach won the Mayor's Trophy for Farmington's Environmental Awards.

Grand River, which received Chamber of Commerce honors. Owner Diane Cassidy said that after years of receiving honorable mention, winning an award was satisfying.

"We've always gotten some recognition, but for us, it was quite a big thrill," Cassidy said.

Several citizens were also honored in the recent awards ceremony. They included:

- Marianne Hellebuyck, known as the "flower lady" for her sun hat, smile, and garden design business. She is a member of the Commission on the Environment and chairwoman of the Remembrance Tree Program.
- Nancy Leonard, charter member of the Historical Commission since its 1974 inception and tireless Warner mansion volunteer.
- Michael and Kelly Nowak, owners of the full-service salon, Legato. Mike serves as a volunteer with the Founders Festival, and Kelly volunteers with Project Lighthouse.

hneedham@homecomm.net | (248) 477-5450

LOCAL NEWS

Mailers in House race spur conflict

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM  
STAFF WRITER

Democratic state House candidate Aldo Vagnozzi - as well as a Montana-based political research organization - have denounced what they describe as a smear campaign by Republican opponent Valerie Knol.

The Republican party and Knol, however, maintain that voters need to know Vagnozzi's stance on important issues. Further, Knol said that she had nothing to do with the recent campaign mailings.

Vagnozzi and Knol are vying for the 37th state House seat representing Farmington and Farmington Hills in the Nov. 5 election.

Recent campaign literature mailed to voters, paid for by the Michigan Republican State Committee, attributes some facts about Vagnozzi's stance on issues to Project Vote Smart. The Montana-based national research organization that compiles answers to questions from political candidates on its Web site, www.vote-smart.org.

Adelaide Elm, senior advisor with Project Vote Smart, debunked several statements in the anti-Vagnozzi literature, including claims that Vagnozzi would fight against teacher testing and merit pay, support taxpayer-funded abortions, increase welfare spending, loosen welfare reform and cut prison funding.

These statements, all attributed to Project Vote Smart, are false, according to Elm.

"Apparently, the Michigan State Republican Committee took some of (Vagnozzi's) answers and misrepresented them in literature that they mailed out," Elm said.

"Project Vote Smart does not substantiate the basis of the attack and in fact finds the attack false. It is Project Vote Smart's policy to condemn any use of its name and programs for negative or partisan political advertising of any kind. Such activity cheats the public of their need for trusted, abundant, accurate, factual information," a Vote Smart press release stated.

On the Web site, voters can see how different political candidates across the nation responded to questions on abortion issues, taxes, campaign finance, crime, education, employment, environment, health, welfare and legislative priorities. Candidates who participate may check off statements that they support.

In Vagnozzi's case, he checked off several statements pertaining to abortion, but left two statements blank - including "abortion should always be illegal," "eliminate public funding for abortions and public funding for organizations that advocate or perform abortions."

This is how the campaign literature misrepresented the information, Elm said.

"If candidates don't check off a statement, it doesn't mean that they're against it. That is a very clear distortion," she said.

As of Oct. 29, Knol had not responded to the questions in the National Political Awareness Test on the Vote Smart site.

Vagnozzi said that other voters - both Democrat and Republican - have expressed disgust to him over the recent mailings.

"Somebody said they got seven in one day," Vagnozzi said. "Most of the people I've talked to say they just throw them away."

When asked whether he thought the campaign literature would hurt his campaign, he said no.

"We're just going to keep working hard," Vagnozzi said, adding that he would continue his door-to-door effort.

The House Republican Campaign Committee, in a written statement, disagreed about the campaign literature facts being inaccurate. The committee also disagreed with Vote Smart's assertion that non response does not equal opposition.

"Last time I checked, if you don't support something, you are against it," said House Speaker Rick Johnson. "Vagnozzi's upset that we're pointing out his slip-flops and doubletalking and poor public policy."

Knol, who like Vagnozzi is continuing an aggressive door-to-door campaign effort, said that she did not send the literature. She also said that it would be "illegal" for her to knowingly send it. She did, however, receive one of the campaign leaflets bearing her name in the mail.

The facts mentioned in the state Republican Party's mailer are well documented and accurately cited. Anyone can go to the Vote Smart Web page and see for themselves the liberal positions my opponent supports," Knol said.

"Some of them, like his stance on taxpayer funded abortion, welfare reform and public safety, are extreme and out of step with our area," she said. "This race is about which candidate has the better vision for the future of this district. I am that candidate."

hneedham@homecomm.net | (248) 477-5450

Hills officials chat with Knollenberg

BY PAUL R. PACE  
STAFF WRITER

U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg visit-

ed with the Farmington Hills City Council at its Oct. 21 study session. Among the topics discussed

with the Washington legislator was what will happen now that President Bush and the House have agreed to eliminate the COPS program that gave cities across the country incentives from the federal government to put more officers on the street. The \$1.1 billion incentive has been cut to \$65 million.

The program supplies grants to pay for a certain number of officers over a three-year period. Much of that funding is now earmarked for the Homeland Security initiative, but the bill is stalled in Washington, Knollenberg said.

He said, "President Bush doesn't want to deal with a bargaining situation," under the current language of bill, stating Bush wants the ability to call at will for action in a crisis situation.

"It's hung up on that," Knollenberg said.

City Manager Steve Brock said crime is up in the city, particularly larcenies and break-ins. He told

Knollenberg keeping the COPS funding afloat is important.

The congressman said some cities don't like the COPS program because some police stations need financial help with technology and not additional officers.

Knollenberg said he doesn't know exactly how local police agencies will be affected under the new Homeland Security Act proposal.

Another issue is state revenues are down nationwide, Knollenberg said.

"We're going to strive to do what we can," he said as far getting more federal dollars to Farmington Hills. "States are suffering in the economy."

As far as road maintenance and expansion funds, Knollenberg said he would work with the state Department of Transportation and the Road Commission for Oakland County to put together a new list of priority projects.

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FYA  
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year.

Farmington Hills Mayor Pro-Tem Christopher McRae emceed the event held at the Glen Oaks Country Club and was joined by U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg, Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard, Farmington Schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield, Hills Mayor Nancy Bates and Farmington Mayor James Mitchell.

Hoffman said referrals to the program have increased 36 percent in the past fiscal year.

Outgoing board chairwoman Sharon Vincent said in her annual report that the board and volunteers have given more than 2,600 hours to the nonprofit organization's many programs, such as Mentor's Plus, Family Education, the Summer Activities Center, Summer Youth Theater, Camp Scholarships, Youth Recognition, and other community meetings.

"This year saw a dramatic growth in our Summer Activities Center and the addition of a Summer Youth Theater project," Vincent said.

"Plans are currently under way for an exciting Second Chance scholarship offered through the generous support of Akebono," she added.

Vincent went on to say FYA's successes can be measured in the faces of the teens at the Summer Activities Center, by notes from youth who had a great camp experience, by the interactions with the after-school tutors, and by the responses from families who have received counseling help and family education services.

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