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SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

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IN THE PAPER
TODAY

Stages to cross: Most Farmington-area high school seniors will head west to graduate. A few will go east and a handful will stay home. /2A

Moving principal: Jan Colliton's career has reached new highs by going to the hill, namely Hillside Elementary. /3A

Taxing matter: With little fanfare or criticism, the Hills City Council approved a 1995-96 budget that will raise property taxes by less than 2 percent on average. /6A

COMMUNITY LIFE

For families: Family Centers of America Inc. recently opened in Farmington Hills with a plan: Help families in crisis. /13A

Rights or wrongs?: Columnist Diane McQuiston is concerned that too many student rights are causing wrongs. /13A

OPINION

On losing Larry: A councilman's decision not to seek re-election and a squabble over a development yield important lessons. /20A

LET'S GO!

Let's Go! Country singer/songwriter Gary Powell of Plymouth is chasing his dream to Nashville. /1B

Movies: John Monaghan talks to Mel Gibson about his new film, "Braveheart" a Scottish historical epic. /7B

SPORTS

Try for two: Harrison High attempted to win its second straight Western Lakes softball championship Wednesday. /1C

Track title: Harrison High captured a Class A regional championship in boys track and field Saturday. /1C

CREATIVE LIVING

Women in art: Area artists were among those who shared their visions in the "Our Visions: Women in Art" exhibit at Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills. /1D

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Larry says farewell, no regrets



By BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

If Farmington Hills Councilman Larry Lichtman has any regret about the last year and a half, it's that his wife, Holly, has had to endure the tough political times with him.

Lichtman, who announced Monday that he won't run for re-election, said that personal considerations aside, he doesn't regret the stands he's taken during the stormy period that began

more than a year ago when the council first took up the proposed Timbercrest development at 12 Mills and Middlebelt.

"I took a position instead of worrying about what was politically expedient," Lichtman said of his stand on Timbercrest and other controversial issues. "But I felt bad for my wife and my kids. It upset my wife that I was spending all this time on City Council matters and was taking a lot of

See editorial, 20A

criticism and personal attacks."

Lichtman first came under attack for backing the Timbercrest development. He was then criticized for not abstaining on votes regarding the project because he had accepted campaign contributions from the developer, Gary Jonna, and Jonna family members.

The latest flare-up came when Lichtman announced to fellow council members that he had accepted a job with Carson Fischer, the law firm that had represented Jonna in the lengthy, sometimes contentious negotiations, meetings and votes on the project.

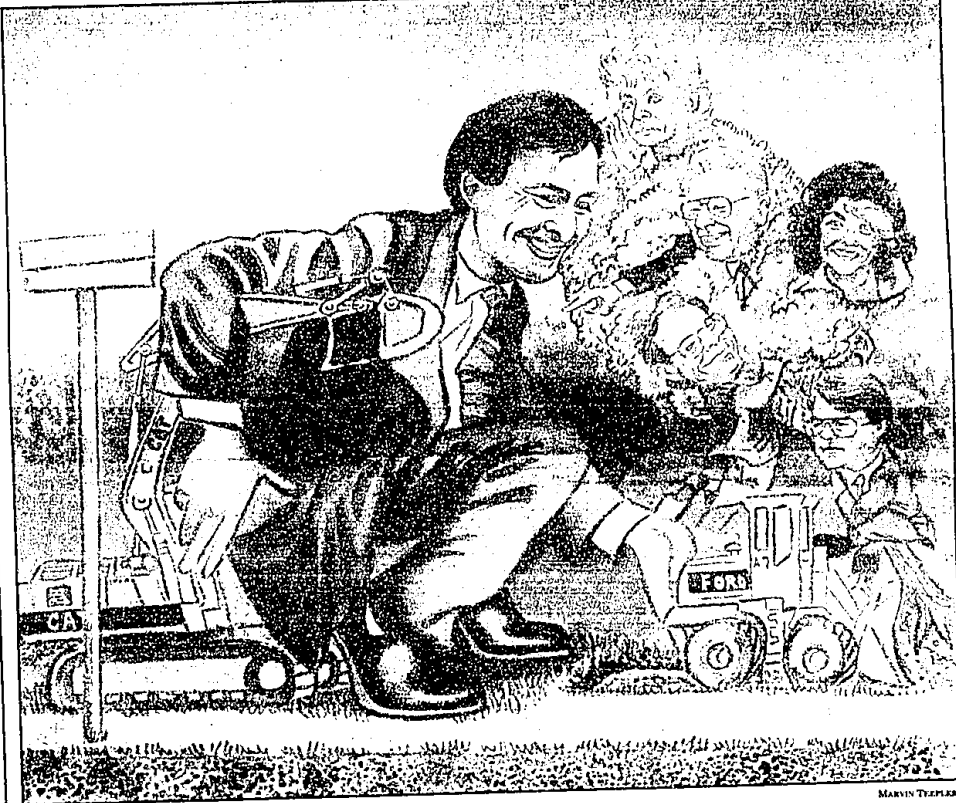
History of service

Lichtman, 37, will finish his sixth year on the City Council after serving the city for four years on the Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Commission. He's not running for re-election, but not because of the controversy over the last two years.

"I never got into it (politics) because I wanted to make a career of it," he said. "I have a young, active family (four children ranging from ages 2-16), and I'd like to give more time to them."

Lichtman, who specializes in bankruptcy law at Carson Fischer as he did at his former firm, Butzel Long,

See LICHTMAN, 2A



MARVIN TRIPLETT

Development fallout?: Larry Lichtman isn't running for re-election to the Farmington Hills City Council. But how will his attitude on development affect the rest of the council?

Grant launches campaign

By MARY RODRIQUE
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills Councilman Jon Grant promises he won't use his office as a campaign platform in his bid for this year's elected mayoral seat.

"Running for mayor is an idea I've devoted a lot of thought to," Grant said. "The job and campaign require a great deal of time. I won't use the council bench to campaign for office."

Grant is a lifelong resident, and a 1970 graduate of North Farmington High School. A member of the City Council since 1989, he served a year

MAYORAL RACE

as a mayor in 1992.

Thanks to Hills voters, who last November approved amending the city charter to allow for the direct election of mayor, this will be the first year of direct election of the mayor. Previously, the charter called for the mayor to be elected by and from the City Council.

"My main priority, whether as mayor or councilman, will be to bring the city up to speed technologically,"

he said. "It's very important fiscally and environmentally."

"Another major issue is redevelopment of our city. We are a maturing city and we have areas facing redevelopment. I'm working on the Grand River corridor improvement committee and I'm vice chairman of the Eight Mile Boulevard Association."

"The city is 95 percent developed, so new growth is limited. Those areas that are left are generally difficult to develop. Density will continue to be



Jon Grant

See GRANT, 6A

Residents head for the Hills' schools

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A few Farmington Hills residents want to seek educational asylum in the Farmington Public Schools. But, they would first have to get a visa to leave the Walled Lake School District.

And, that's not very likely.

Nonetheless, Farmington Hills parent Raymond Dubin is studying the feasibility of such a transfer. Several parents he's spoken to in the 14 Mile-Helsted area would go along with a move, he said.

Three recent bond proposal failures

Related story, 4A

and a pending shift of 475 students from Maple Elementary to a school building leased from the Birmingham district on 14 Mills and Inkster roads has upset a few parents. Quality of Walled Lake schools is not the issue, Dubin said.

About 670 students who live in the Hills attend Walled Lake schools. "We're Farmington Hills residents and we're paying Farmington Hills taxes. We're an integral part of the community," said Dubin, the father

of a Maple Elementary student. "Yet, we're totally ostracized from the educational part of the Farmington district."

Dubin said he's contacted one Farmington board member. He wouldn't elaborate.

Walled Lake schools board member and Hills resident Marc Siegler said it's a small minority that's unhappy.

"We have a lot of parents who moved here because they wanted to attend Walled Lake schools," Siegler said.

Farmington schools receives one or two calls a year inquiring about join-

ing the district, said Don Cowan, executive director for elementary school instruction. Some Hills residents also attend Clarenceville schools.

"That has been up and down over the years," Cowan said.

Could Farmington absorb those students? Of the 675 students in question, 475 are elementary age.

Farmington's Forest Elementary is a 1 1/2 miles from the area in question — between 13 and 14 Mills and Drake and Helsted. The school is under capacity, but only by 60-70 students.

See SCHOOLS, 4A