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Lichtman takes swipe at housing foes

By STEVE BARNABY

Farmington editor
In an unprecedented move, the Farmington Hills City Council has named a former mayor as a lifetime resident of the city.

Fred Lichtman, who served in township and city government from 1968 to 1978, was given the honor at this week's city council session.

Lichtman, an oil company executive, is moving to Marshall, Mich. where he has purchased a home.

In a style which city hall watchers have become accustomed to over the years, Lichtman honored those with whom he worked and lashed out at the fortress suburbia attitude which he has

combated throughout his entire political career.

Admitting that it had been personally "tough" for him to resign from the council, he contrasted the accomplishments of the past with the present political battle over senior citizen and low income housing.

The issue has dominated the city council race, with incumbents fighting challengers over the best way to build the housing or whether to build it at all.

"There are certain responsibilities that communities have. They transcend economics, aesthetics or land values. These are the human issues," he said.

"Low income and elderly housing don't have a damn thing to do with

property values, finance or referendum. It is a human issue."

Lichtman recalled past political frays when persons fought to close off subdivisions from neighboring subdivisions by barricading streets. He also told of how some groups wanted to put churches and schools in industrial areas.

"If you can close a street, you can close a community. I don't want it to happen here," he told the audience, some of which consisted of council candidates and supporters.

"If we close our community, if we close our hearts and our minds, we might as well close civilization as we know it," he said.

Lichtman honored City Clerk Floyd Cairns as one of the "finest public officials I've ever met."

He also paid homage to long-time political foe Mayor Earl Oppertbauer, who presented him with the proclamation naming him a lifetime resident.

"Earl, the old political warhorse, he'll probably outlast everybody," said Lichtman.

It was Oppertbauer who urged Lichtman to become involved in politics during the years the township was struggling to become a city through incorporation.

Lichtman served on the city's charter commission in 1972 and 1973. He also served on the zoning board of appeals.

Oppertbauer had paid earlier trib-

ute to Lichtman when presenting the proclamation.

"We didn't always agree. But I did reassess my positions because of the respect I had for Fred's reasoning. And I learned to admire him," said Oppertbauer.

But Lichtman saved his biggest praise for former City Attorney Terry Brennan, who is now deceased.

"This community will never fully appreciate Terry Brennan. He was the workhorse of incorporation. He smoothed the transition," said Lichtman.

Lichtman credited Brennan with helping to develop zoning ordinances which aided the city in developing into the kind of community which it is today.



FRED LICHTMAN

Senator says gamblers should pay state tax

By MARY GNIEWEK

State Senator Doug Ross, D-Oak Park, said he will lead Senate opposition to proposed legislation that would exempt all racetrack winnings from Michigan income tax.

Ross said that if House Bill 4531 passes, it could cost the State Treasury more than a half million dollars of taxpayers' money.

The measure passed the state House of Representatives and is before the Senate, where a vote is expected soon.

The bill is sponsored by state Reps. Michael Griffin, D-Jackson, and Dana Wilson, D-Hazel Park, who said it is intended to put racetrack betting on an even keel with bingo and the Michigan State Lottery.

Griffin said the legislation would make Michigan's six racetracks more

competitive with Windsor Raceway, where winnings are not taxed.

Ross knocked those arguments. He said at the track, winners get about 80 cents of every dollar bet while 50 cents of every dollar bet in the state lottery goes to the State Treasury before any numbers are drawn.

"The racing industry also argues that they need the tax exemption on gambling winnings to compete for patrons with the tax free racetrack," Ross said. "But two of the three tracks with the greatest attendance losses aren't in the Detroit area."

IN JANUARY, the state began withholding 4.6 percent in taxes on winnings of \$1,000 or more at the betting window, the way 20 percent in taxes is collected for the federal government.

If House Bill 4531 passes, the state withholding tax at the window would be abolished. Instead, winners would be expected to pay their share of taxes by declaring their winnings on state income tax returns.

George Maskin, spokesman for the Detroit Race Course in Livonia, claims the state is currently taxing winnings twice.

"On the average, depending on the type of bet placed, the state already gets 7% percent of every dollar bet at the racetrack — in cash at the end of the day."

Griffin said the main reason he sponsored the legislation was to make Michigan tracks more competitive with Canadian racetracks.

"There will be no great revenue loss. Philosophically, some people are opposed to gambling of any kind."

Both Griffin and Wilson represent districts with horse racetracks — Jackson and Hazel Park.

"We have to keep a strong racetrack industry in the state, Wilson said. "Many Michigan farms breed race horses."

"We have to keep parity with other gambling devices in the state."

"There's no way to tell how much money the state would lose," he added. "It depends on the honesty of the bettor at the window."

Ross opposes the bill on two fronts.

"It's fiscally unsound. We're going to lose money on horse racing revenue while essential programs, like the home heat credit for the elderly and poor, don't have money for operation."

"Also, the idea that gambling winnings at the racetrack should go tax free while the money the rest of us earn by hard, honest work is heavily taxed is outrageous."

Ross said the only way to stop the "racetrack ripoff" is an enormous public protest by Michigan taxpayers.



Sounding out words always helps in developing reading skills. Teacher Wendy Poole (center) aids students, Stefanie Weisberg, 5, (left) and John

Huber, 5, in identifying pictures. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

Farmington Hills youth faces rap on manslaughter

By MARY GNIEWEK

An 18-year-old Farmington Hills youth has been charged with manslaughter stemming from an Oct. 14 traffic accident in Farmington which took the life of a Farmington Hills resident and injured two others.

Donald Wayne Sexton, 20933 Goldsmith, was arraigned Tuesday morning before Judge Margaret Schaefer in Farmington's 47th District Court.

He was charged with manslaughter, a felony which carries a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison and a \$7,500 fine.

He was also charged with unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, a misdemeanor which carries a maximum penalty of two years imprisonment and \$1,000.

Sexton pleaded not guilty to both charges. He was released on \$5,000 personal bond. A pre-trial examination date has not yet been scheduled.

According to police, a 1976 Chevrolet Blazer traveling eastbound on Freedom road ran a red traffic light at the intersection of Farmington Road at 1:41 a.m. and hit two cars.

Police said the Blazer was traveling at an excessive rate of speed. One witness estimated the speeds at between 80 and 100 miles per hour when the accident occurred.

The Blazer hit a car traveling through the intersection northbound on Farmington Road pulling off its front end. The airborne Blazer then skidded

380 feet, touching the road just four times before it plowed head-on into a car driven by Robert Matthew Cianciolo, 20, of Farmington Hills.

CIANCIOLO'S CAR, westbound on Freedom, was waiting for the traffic light to change when it was struck. The impact carried the vehicle across the opposite lane of traffic and onto a grassy hill which abuts the M-102 overpass.

Cianciolo was dead at the scene. He became the first traffic fatality recorded in Farmington this year.

The driver and passenger of the first car hit, Michael and Arlene Pheny of Farmington, were treated for injuries at Botsford Hospital and released.

Pheny suffered bruises. His wife suffered bruises and dislocated foot bones.

"He pulled my front end off as if it were tissue being pulled out of a Kleenex box," Pheny said. "I'm happy to be alive."

"If he had been further into the intersection, five or six feet, we would have been killed, too."

Police said Sexton was driving the Blazer.

A passenger, Ralph Wheeler, 18, of Farmington, left the accident scene, but turned himself in to police Sunday afternoon.

"We think he left because he was in a state of shock," said Lt. John Santomauro.

Santomauro said results of a blood-alcohol test showed that Sexton had been drinking.

Education today

Reading can be F-U-N

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

The uninspired rhyming scheme of mat, rat, pat, has been edged out by such cartoon-like characters as Tall Teeth, Horrible Hair and Munchy Mouth.

Immaculately dressed Dick and Jane have been replaced by kids who look like the next door neighbor dressed in blue jeans and a T-shirt. Their friends are Hispanic and black. Mom holds down a job.

But such an outward change in the task of learning to read masks a quieter movement which utilizes a variety of methods to acquaint children with the written word.

Of these techniques, which include phonics, word recognition, puzzles, reading out loud and dictating stories, there isn't one darling of the moment among educators.

"The best program is a combination of all techniques," said Wendy Poelke, who teaches reading at Farmington's Woodcreek Elementary School.

"Anyone who says that (there is only one viable technique) doesn't have the information to back them. Overall, no technique is the best. Each child has a different learning method."

It's this recognition that each child learns differently which colors the way reading is taught.

"I USE whatever helps the child," said Marion Spencer, a 25-year teaching veteran at Flanders Elementary School in Farmington.

"I've taught kids from the intellectually gifted to the learning disabled and the method is the same — find out where they are and move from there."

Moving on from there can take a variety of forms. Within the past 20 years educators have shifted from affirming that "phonics is everything" to "phonics is nothing," according to Assistant Superintendent Lawrence Freedman.

Phonics is back in the classroom after being replaced by a method in the '60s which required the child learn words as a whole rather than as individual sounds. That method is still around because teachers and administrators insist that not every child learns through phonics.

"We latch onto everything that's available," said Freedman.

Children are taught to use the meaning of the sentence as clues to the definition of a new word. For 5- and 6-year students who are just beginning to learn the rudiments of reading, the reformation that faced their parents has disappeared. Instead of endless

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One of the activities which help children learn how to read is making a picture dictionary comprised of clippings from magazines. Here, Lauren DiCola, 6, of Woodcreek School works on her dictionary. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

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Seminar planned

All residents interested in learning how to get their news out to the public are invited to attend the Farmington Observer press seminar. Stated for Nov. 1 at 7:30 p.m. at the Twelve Mile Library, the seminar will feature presentations by the staff, questions and answers and a brand new slide presentation on today's community journalism. Be sure to fill out the coupon and bring a friend. It's free. Refreshments will be served.

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Down to Earth 13C
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Inside Angles 3A
Obituaries 2A
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