

Rampant kindness

Right angle: Qualified Construction's Haris Katzman offered his company's services, at the suggestion of Rick Lampi, Farmington Hills Community Development coordinator, to build a barrier-free ramp for resident Irene Grimsley, who is in a wheelchair after recently having her leg amputated. The city supplied materials and Qualified Construction provided the labor.



Principal puts principles before job

BY JENNIFER PLACINTO
STAFF WRITER

It's a vision — one that Walled Lake Central High School principal Jerry Hartsock isn't willing to compromise to keep his job.

That's what staff and students say about Hartsock's recent notice that he is thinking of resigning at the end of the school year.

Walled Lake schools serve a northwest portion of Farmington Hills.

"He wants the best school in the nation and we're pretty close," said Craig Auten, Central's restructuring co-chair and teacher liaison to the PTSA. "We've got every component, but the last one is the hardest to work with."

That final ingredient is the teaching staff, and Auten said the teaching method Hartsock wants all of them to back is interdisciplinary instruction.

"It's somewhat idealistic, but I agree with him," Auten said.

Instead of students accepting what they're told, Auten said, Hartsock envisions them performing the work.

"Kids become the teachers, they become the artists, they become the poets," Auten said. "It's one thing to learn about a math concept, it's another to show it through a project."

"He feels that we are so close, as a school, to a major breakthrough and won't take that step," Auten said. "If we don't, he feels he might not be the right match for us as a group."

Hartsock could not be reached comment.

Auten said about 70 of the school's 90 teachers approve of the teaching method. The school already features restructured 90-minute classes with some integrated programs. A prime example is an independent study group of three Central seniors who are design an architectural plan to build a playground, gazebo and other landscaping for the new Foster Farmhouse site in

Walled Lake.

In addition to passing around petitions and organizing a rally, which failed because of inclement weather, students have posted signs throughout the building reading: "We support Jerry Hartsock" and "Jerry don't leave."

"We're trying to express what the students can do," said senior Ed Hufnagle, student body president. "We can't affect classes, but we can affect the atmosphere at this school."

Some of the faculty here are against alternating schedules," said senior Frank Geisler. "They've been here so long and they're into the old style teaching and they don't want to change."

Geisler, Hufnagle and senior Alex Boffi said they support Hartsock in whatever decision he makes — much like Central's PTSA. At their Nov. 17 meeting, the PTSA unanimously approved a motion supporting Hartsock's work the past three years. They

also agreed to support his final decision.

"He's very supportive of interdisciplinary units and schools within a school and having students be a part of the conversations that go on," said Craig Keeler, Central PTSA vice president. "In all my years, I've never seen quite the outpouring of student support."

"I'm very sad to see him leave," said PTSA member Lisa Heilach. "He's the heart and soul of these kids and I think it's a great loss for the students."

"He's very much interested in new directions and trying new things," said PTSA treasurer Kathy Burt. "We want him to know how much we support what he's doing."

"It's a complicated resignation," Auten said. "What it does is really put the pressure back on us. We're hoping to have a lot of different dialogue happening in the next two to three months."

POLICE AND FIRE CALLS

The following police and fire incidents occurred during the past week in the Farmington and Farmington Hills area.

STOLEN VEHICLES

In Farmington Hills:

A \$10,000 green 1996 Dodge Neon was stolen from Windermere Apartments on Independence Drive between Dec. 1-2.

A 1997 Olds Achieva was stolen from an Independence Green Apartment residence Dec. 3. The owner said he met a woman and they returned to his apartment. When he awoke, the woman and the car were gone.

THEFTS

In Farmington Hills:

Air bags and a dome light were stolen after entry was made through an unlocked door of a 1993 Ford Probe parked at Echo Valley Apartments between Dec. 1-2.

An air bag and interior light were stolen from a 1997 Ford Probe parked at Farmington Square Condominiums between Dec. 1-2.

An air bag and dome light were stolen from a 1995 Ford Probe parked at Farmington Square Condominiums between Dec. 1-2.

A woman's wallet containing credit cards was stolen from a

back room at Jeanne's Hallmark on 12 Mile Dec. 2.

Two bronze statues were stolen from Ruth Associates on Northwestern Highway and 13 Mile between Nov. 26-28.

Two JL Audio speakers and an amplifier were stolen after entry was made through the trunk of a 1998 Saturn parked at Saturn of Farmington Hills on Haggerty Dec. 4.

A pager and \$40 cash were stolen from a 1985 Ford Mustang parked at St. Fabian's Church on 12 Mile Dec. 4.

THREAT

In Farmington:

A 20-year-old Farmington Hills man told police he was verbally threatened Thursday afternoon at 47th District Court, 32795 10 Mile Road.

According to public safety reports, the victim was raking leaves in front of the court about 12:30 p.m. when a dark blue Ford Escort, driven by a woman and occupied by a man, drove by. The passenger yelled at the victim and accused him of staring at the car.

A short while later, the victim was approached by the passenger in the court lobby, with the latter singing insulting gangster lyrics directed toward him. The

victim then went back outside to continue raking leaves when he saw the same car, occupied by the same people, driving slowly past him.

The passenger allegedly yelled threats out of the window, including that he would kill the victim. The victim said he had no idea who the people were or why they were insulting and threatening him. He told police he thought the pair were "gang types."

DOMESTIC ASSAULT

In Farmington Hills:

Police were called after a woman said her live-in boyfriend ripped her shirt and tried to suffocate her with his hands before leaving with jewelry worth several thousands of dollars Dec. 2. The woman, who is in a wheelchair, said the man became enraged after she received a phone call from a male friend.

Police arrested a 69-year-old woman after a man said his wife slapped him in the face and bit his hand twice during an argument Dec. 2. The 76-year-old man had two cuts on his hands but refused medical treatment. Both admitted to police they had been drinking at a dinner party.

Police arrested a Hills man,

41, after a woman was kicked in the ribs and head-butted by her former live-in boyfriend Dec. 5. The victim said she was sleeping when the man pulled her out of bed and began kicking her. She fled the home and called police. The woman was holding her left side and had several red marks on her forehead. Officers found the man sleeping in her bed and he was intoxicated. He denied hitting the woman.

BREAK-INS

In Farmington Hills:

Two air bags were stolen after the side vent window was broken on a 1997 Ford Escort parked on Northwestern and Clairview Dec. 2.

Several vehicles were broken into at Crosswinds Condominium Dec. 3-4. A 10-disc compact disc changer and 10 CDs were stolen after a window was broken out of a 1996 Mazda four-door. A cellular phone was stolen after the vent window was broken on a 1996 Geo also parked at the complex. A cell phone and calculator were stolen after the driver's side window was broken on a 1996 Pontiac Sunfire. A

driver's side vent window was smashed but nothing taken from a 1995 Nissan Altima.

In Farmington:

Someone broke into a Ford Probe in the parking lot of Brookdale Condominiums, at Grand River and Shiawasee, and stole a gray air bag, valued at approximately \$300. The incident took place between 9 p.m. Monday and 8:45 a.m. Tuesday.

RAPE

In Farmington Hills:

A 27-year-old woman told police a male friend forced her to have intercourse at her apartment Nov. 30. She described the man as a friend who had helped her financially in the past. She let the man into her apartment at 9 a.m. and told him she was still sleeping. She told him to fix himself something to eat and that she'd be going back to bed. She found him laying in her bed when she returned from the bathroom. He grabbed her by the hair and forced himself on her and left.

VANDALISM

In Farmington Hills:

The rear quarter panel, hood

and roof on a 1997 Land Rover was damaged after being hit with rocks while parked at the Land Rover Dealership on Grand River between Nov. 27-28, causing \$2,000 damage.

PURSE SMASHING

In Farmington Hills:

A man grabbed a woman's purse as she was loading groceries into her vehicle at Danny's on Eight Mile and Beech at 5:30 p.m. Dec. 3. The suspect, described as a black male in his 20s and wearing a dark color stadium jacket, ran off and then drove away in a gold mid-sized vehicle. The purse contained credit cards and a checkbook.

DRUNKEN DRIVING

In Farmington Hills:

Police arrested a Farmington Hills man, 44, for drunken driving on eastbound 10 Mile and Inkster at 2:57 a.m. Dec. 4. Police stopped the 1995 GMC van after it struck the shoulder several times. The driver had a blood alcohol of .16 percent, which is above the legal limit of .10 percent.

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