

Mrs. Mitchell retires from library

By DIANE HUBEL

FARMINGTON—Mrs. Mary Mitchell, director of the Farmington District Library will be leaving the library staff at the end of the summer.

Mrs. Mitchell told the Library Board and the Friends of the Library of her intention to resign at a recent meeting. She said she and her husband plan to move to a ranch on the Minnesota-South Dakota border and raise cattle and horses.

She has been the director of the library since 1970. During her four years as director the library has

instituted several new programs and services, as well as adding a new branch.

MRS. MITCHELL was responsible for hiring the staff, buying the books and setting up the services in the 12 Mile library.

"It really was a rare opportunity and a rare privilege," she said. "Not many librarians get the chance to build up a library from nothing. I am really proud of the staff we have here. I think they are really good."

During the past two years the circulation at the library has

nearly doubled and the number of volumes has increased from 17,000 to 40,000.

Among the programs that have been organized at the library she thinks the children's programs, which includes movies, puppet shows and displays, have been the most successful.

She said the library tried to organize programs for all segments of the community. A visiting librarian visits convalescent and senior citizen homes twice a week.

A program for blind residents in Oakland county has also been organized. The program makes talk-

ing books available to blind residents in the entire county.

Chief Tuck-A-Book-A-Week-Away, a club for blind youngsters is part of this program.

"THE THING that I am most pleased about is that the library has turned into a community center kind of place," she said. "Various groups feel free to come in and use our books and our meeting rooms and that is the way it should be."

Mrs. Mitchell who was born in Minnesota is a graduate of the University of Minnesota. She said the greater part of her career was

spent at the Detroit Public Library where she was a personnel director.

After leaving Detroit she went to work as a joint coordinator with the Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills libraries.

"The thing I have liked most about this job is the community involvement with the library," she said.

"People in Farmington really appreciate the library and really use it. When the 12 Mile library opened I said we would double our circulation in two years. I can't know if we have exactly doubled it but we have come awfully close."



MRS. MARY MITCHELL

Larry Mayer looks back at progress

"Sometimes I think he doesn't have patience with bureaucracy."
—a planning commissioner

By DIANE HUBEL

Larry Mayer is the closest thing to a King Midas that Farmington has. He can't turn things into gold, but he can take run down old buildings and gasoline stations and turn them into glitter.

Mayer has almost singlehandedly turned one section of Grand River from what he called a derelict section to a respectable residential and office building section.

To date Mayer has renovated two old gas stations, three homes and an old carriage house. Currently he is making plans to convert a third old gas station to an office building.

HIS MOST outstanding renovation has been the conversion of a gas station into his flower shop on Grand River. Presently the shop doesn't even faintly resemble a gas station yet few structural changes were made in the building itself.

Even the large doors which opened into the service section of the gas station have been left intact. He has turned them into show windows and a front door by closing off portions to serve as separators.

Mayer said it is necessary to have the cooperation of the city to do the kind of things he does.

"I run into a lot of problems with them," he said. "Actually it hasn't been as bad the last few times as it was at first, now that they have seen

what I can do. After all they can't really complain about an upgrading."

Dennis Phieney, a member of the Farmington city planning commission, said, "I think Larry has little use for the planning commission and all the bureaucracy that goes with it. He has done a great job, all you have to do is drive down Grand River to see that."

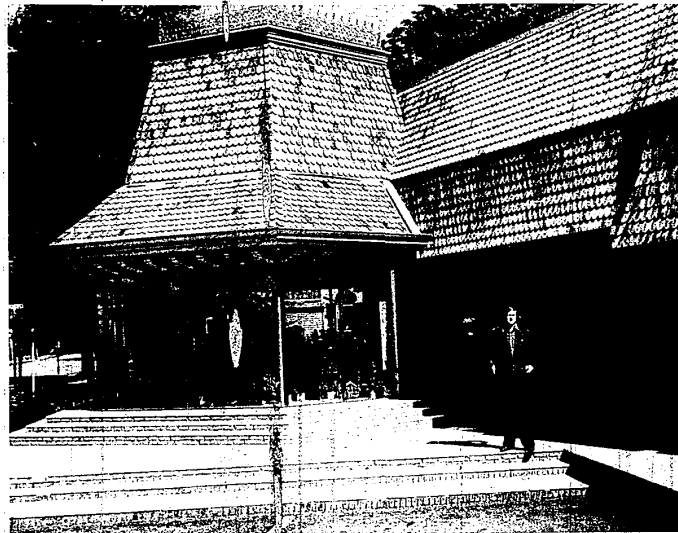
"I think that as you come down Grand River from the west that section is one of the loveliest vistas you have and Larry Mayer is largely responsible."

Despite the fact that his renovations have greatly enhanced the appearance of that portion of the city Mayer does not see himself as civic renovator.

"WE GOT into this out of necessity," he said. "When we were first married we bought this old derelict house on Grand River because we couldn't afford anything else."

"It was really a derelict too, walls were crumbling and the ceiling was a mess. Anyway we had to fix it up by ourselves."

Mayer said he and his wife began buying up the other property in the area as "protection" for themselves. He thought the other people didn't care about taking care of the neighborhood and let their homes get run down.



Larry Mayer's flower shop, converted from an old gas station (Evert photo)

Eventually he and his wife bought the houses on either side of them and a little carriage house behind them. They also bought back the land which was part of their original lot.

"This all sounds very acquisitional," he said. "Actually it would be more correct to say the bank owns all of this and we are just holding onto it and taking care of it for them."

The Mayers converted the two homes into duplex apartments and the carriage house into an apartment. The first service station they bought was just down the street from the homes.

Currently it is an office building with rough redwood shingles and sid-

ing. At the time he began renovation redwood shingles were a fairly new feature.

"We ran into problems with that at first he said, 'They told us it would be a fire hazard. Why should they care? After all it is a building, if it burns I am the one who is out of luck.'"

HE ALSO ran into problems with the city when he tried to add a second story to the building. He wanted to extend the second floor over the parking lot, a relatively new feature at the time he proposed it.

"That type of thing is done all the time now," he said. "But at the time

it was new, so of course they wouldn't let us do it. That is why we bought the building the flower shop is in now, we needed more room."

The building, a combination of high windows and brick, looks like a cross between a wedding cake and a gingerbread house.

Mayer said at one time he wanted to buy the LaSalle Winery on Grand River but gave up the idea when he ran into difficulty buying the property.

"He had intended to use it for small boutiques and a restaurant."

"The time for that has really passed by now," he said. "It would have been a good idea at the time and

a good addition to the city but now it is too late."

WITH THE exception of the house they live in and the flower shop, the Mayers rent out all the other buildings they have restored.

"The only problem with doing this way," Mayer said, "is that it makes it very difficult to rent out. If we were large land owners who never saw the property we wouldn't care."

"The problem is that we do care and if the people don't take good enough care of it it bothers us. We are also pretty fussy when we rent it out."

"If the person doesn't seem as excited as he should be or seems like he wouldn't take good care of it we just don't rent it out. It does get difficult."



Finnish cultural center fruit of hard work

By DIANE HUBEL

Sisu — a Finnish word which means determination or stick-to-it-ness.

The Finnish Center Association has adopted it as its trademark, an appropriate word to use in describing the association's efforts to bring a cultural center to the Metropolitan Detroit area.

AFTER YEARS of working to raise the funds necessary for such a project the organization was able to hold their cornerstone laying ceremony recently on Eight Mile Rd. in Farmington.

Mrs. Viola Pudas, the cultural center committee chairman said, "It has been the dream of Finns in the area to have a cultural center for many years. I even remember my mother used to speak about it."

William Pudas, her husband, said there have always been a number of separate Finnish groups who all wanted the same thing — the cultural center.

"Finns are very independent people," he said. "Each person would belong to their own organization and they had nothing to do with the other groups."

But now finally all the organizations have joined together under the name of the Finnish Center Association to build this building.

Mrs. Pudas will act as mistress of ceremonies at the cornerstone laying ceremony. Pudas, Elder Linnata of the Apostolic Lutheran Church in Southfield will present the invocation. Featured speakers will be Ted Puuri, president of the association and Harri Virjo, the Finnish Consul.

A sealed container with the association by-laws, constitution, history, seal and pin will be placed behind the cornerstone.

The container will also have the front pages of the Detroit News and the Free Press, an association membership list and Bi-Centennial and Sisu car bumper stickers.

THE ASSOCIATION has raised the money for the center by holding

bazaars, bake sales, and sponsoring booths at the different ethnic festivals on the area.

They have also sold bonds and had what they called a "golden brick program," where whereby people donated as much as they wanted specifically for the building. Sticking to their claim of independence, the association did not ask the government for any aid or money. They have raised it all on their own.

One man in the organization was in charge of collecting old papers and selling them to recycling companies. He raised \$5,000 for the association through his paper drives.

The building which will be complete this September will have a meeting hall, a kitchen, an import shop and a classroom and library.

The architect, a Finnish-American from Ann Arbor, Eino Kainlahti, designed the building so that additions could be added when the funds were available.

PLANS CALL for a restaurant and

cocktail lounge, Finnish saunas, a game room and a larger meeting hall. If more land becomes available to the association they also hope to add a swimming pool.

Mrs. Pudas said that the Finnish center building would be available for parties and receptions as well as any association activities. The main purpose however is to feature and highlight the Finnish culture.

A library with books in both English and Finnish has already been started. The group brings Finnish artists to Detroit and their performances will be presented at the center when possible.

Classes in the Finnish language will also be taught at the center.

There will also be performances by Finnish-Americans who live in the area and are part of choirs or Finnish dance groups.

The initial building will be complete in September of this year. Special opening ceremonies and programs will be held during the week of the September 21-28.

Man is killed changing tire

FARMINGTON HILLS—A 32-year-old father of three was killed Friday when a tire he was changing exploded.

Leo Kaliszewski, 30649 Clairview Ct., Farmington was dead on arrival at Botsford General Hospital. The county medical examiner said the death was caused by mutilating head wounds.

Farmington Hills police who investigated the accident said they do not know what caused the accident. They said the tire was not defective.

Police said Kaliszewski was lying on the ground beside the tire when they arrived. A hydraulic

jack was beneath the truck. They said they were unsuccessful in their attempts to use artificial respirators.

A funeral mass was held on Tuesday, June 18 at St. Coleman's church in Farmington Hills following a short service at McCabes funeral home, 31950 W. 12 Mile Rd.

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Leo T. Kaliszewski. He is survived by his wife Janet, two sons, Thomas and Brian and a daughter, Michelle.

He is also survived by two sisters, Mrs. Sydney Modak and Mrs. William San Tili, and a brother Arthur J. Kaliszewski.

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Have stage need talent

"If you have talent, we have the stage. . . and we'd love to have you perform."

That's the word from Helene Blackman, chairman of the festival entertainment committee, who need performers for the mobile stage which will be located in the Downtown Farmington Center, Monday through Saturday, July 22-27, from noon to 9 p.m., during the 10th Annual Farmington Founders Festival.

Performances designed for either children or adults will be welcome. Sets of 30 to 60 minutes are planned.

The mobile stage is equipped

with electricity and amplification systems. Interested performers may apply to Helene Blackman at 851-5416.

4 earn WMU scholarships

Four Farmington residents have been awarded academic scholarships to attend Western Michigan University in the fall. They are:

Jacqueline Ellens, 25726 Kilreigh, Shawn Gallagher, 33076 Manulout, Jeffrey Herman, 23523 Longacre, and Janet Skrovan, 30061 Old Bedford.