

# Woman tells story of addiction to help others

By Joan Adamczak  
staff writer

A couple of years ago, Carol Hochstein watched an acquaintance literally

starve herself to death. The woman died weighing a ghostly 57 pounds — a tragic result of the eating disorder anorexia nervosa.

Just last year, Hochstein herself



RANDY DORST/staff photographer

Carol Hochstein of Farmington Hills wants to help other young people from falling into the pitfalls of addiction.

weighed only 89 pounds.

"Everything is thin, thin, thin. You're never thin enough," said the 27-year-old Farmington-Hills resident. Even though her weight is now normal for her 5-foot-7-inch frame, Hochstein still feels she could lose "a good 10 or 15 pounds."

Anorexia is a personality disorder, occurring primarily in young women, characterized by an aversion to food and an obsession with weight loss. Bulimia is another eating disorder, in which a person has an insatiable appetite for food. After eating, a bulimic will purge their body of the food eaten by inducing vomiting.

Anorexia and bulimia are just two in a list of problems Hochstein has been coping with for the past nine years. She describes herself as a recovering alcoholic and anorexic. Up until six months ago, she also suffered from bulimia.

"I haven't thrown up in almost six months now," she said, "but back then there were times when I would make myself vomit up to 20 times a day."

The business student wanted to share her experiences with others who may be experiencing similar difficulties.

**HOCHSTEIN SAYS** her problems began after her family moved and she transferred from a small, private high school to a large public school. She had her first drink when she was 15.

"It was wonderful," Hochstein said of her first "drunk." "I loved what the alcohol did for me. It made me feel as though I could do anything."

Her drinking escalated, and by the time she was 20 she was drinking daily.

"I reached a point where I either had to take that morning drink or take some speed. I would do anything for that first drink or drug or fix," Hochstein recalled, playing nervously with a string of beads around her neck.

At the time her family moved, Hochstein said she began to grow "taller and wider." Someone at school called her "pudgy" and that is when she began to diet.

"Being the compulsive person that I am, I became a compulsive dieter. The most I weighed then was 140. In about four months, I was down to 110," she said.

Eventually she got down to 92 pounds and was existing on a piece of toast and an orange for her daily meal. After a few months, she discovered a "wonderful new trick."

"I figured out a way in which I could eat all I want and stay skinny too," she said, pausing to light another cigarette.

"All I had to do was to throw up every time I ate."

**THIS NIGHTMARE** lasted for nine years — nine years that Hochstein calls hell.

"I didn't know how to live without throwing up," she said quietly. "I was so out of control I used to go to bed at 8 p.m. just so I wouldn't eat anything and have to make myself sick again."

In 1980, after a broken engagement with her boyfriend, a car accident in which she totaled her car and an overdose of pills and alcohol, Hochstein finally checked into St. Mary's Hospital in Livonia.

Todd tried to treat me for my anorexia but ended up treating me for alcoholism," she said. "I finally had to admit that I had a problem."

After being introduced to Alcoholics Anonymous, Hochstein stopped drinking but still refused to eat. At 22 years old, she tried to kill herself by consuming crystallized lye.

She was rushed to the emergency room at Oakwood Hospital in Dearborn. This was the first of a long list of hospital stays for Hochstein. She has been in the hospital 29 times since then and has had major surgery twice to repair the burns to her mouth, tongue and esophagus caused by the lye.

"It was the most humiliating experience of my whole life," Hochstein remembers of the surgery.

"When I left the hospital two days before Christmas, I had to wear a metal brace that stuck out of my mouth, and I had to wear a towel around my neck because I could not control my saliva."

The only place she went for nine months while the brace was in her mouth was to AA meetings. It was the most painful time of her life, Hochstein said.

"I COULD not talk worth a damn. I had to go to speech therapy and occupational therapy for a year."

Even after all her pain and suffering from the surgery on her mouth, Hochstein still could not stop her bulimia. She did not know how to handle life without vomiting.

"It took me four more years of sheer hell until I finally decided that I wanted to live more than I wanted to die and if I was going to live I was going to have to stop vomiting," Hochstein said.

"I am very proud to say that I have not thrown up in six months, and I feel wonderful."

Looking back on the last nine years of her life, Hochstein has a better un-

derstanding of herself and the problems she still faces.

"Bulimia is an emotional sickness, it's a way of flushing my problems down the drain instead of facing them."

Before, if someone made Hochstein angry, she could not confront her anger in front of anyone. Instead, she would resort to making herself vomit. Today, she tries to channel those negative feelings and energy into something positive like riding her bike, running or taking a walk.

Her eating habits are "good" now, (she eats three meals a day), and she has not had a drink in 2½ years. She attends AA meetings seven times a week and also talks with an eating dis-

order therapy group two times a week.

Eventually Hochstein would like to start her own therapy group for people with problems similar to hers. She would also like to get married someday and raise a family.

But, for right now, all Hochstein wants to do is help others who may have problems similar to hers.

"My advice is for people to seek professional help from a licensed physician with an anorexia background, to go to group therapy and to really want to get help," Hochstein said.

"By sharing my problems, other people will find out that they are not alone. There is hope, you can recover if you want to."

## Change eyed in school formula

Continued from Page 1

Flanagan says school officials are hoping the recapture rate will eventually be zero. But Rep. Wilbur (Sandy) Brotherton, R-Farmington, says the chances of that happening are slim.

"The formula just doesn't seem to be working," Brotherton says. "Until we (legislators) can go in and create a whole new formula, we'll just have to continue with these patchwork adjustments to the present system."

Eugene Farnum, legislative consultant for Michigan Out-of-Formula District Association, agrees with Brotherton.

"Obviously the formula is not working if we have more than 140 school districts out-of-formula in Michigan," Farnum says.

"Eventually, we will have to find a new way to fund the school districts. For right now, all we can do is review the formula every year and try to amend it when possible," Farnum says.

## Job opening up for discussion

Continued from Page 1

"They have yet to discuss even naming the search committee," Papal said Friday.

Library trustee Charlotte Yaverski said the subject of Lewis' successor had not yet been discussed by the board.

"No, because we haven't had a board meeting. As far as I know, there hasn't been (any discussion). I'm assuming that discussion will take place Thursday night."

Library trustee Jonathan Grant said the position vacancy had not been posted.

"We have not taken any action whatsoever," he said.

Jim Wibby, another library board member, said he sensed a general feeling among trustees that the position should be advertised "to see what's available out in the market."

Wibby said trustees had not yet determined what exact procedures to use in searching for a successor to Lewis, who had served as library director since 1974.

"As far as I know, I'm not trying to be evasive or vague, this will be a topic at the next board meeting in June," Wibby said.

"At this point yet, it's not been decided how we're going to do it," he said Friday.

## City adds staff

Continued from Page 1

fixed costs have increased," Biasell said Thursday.

The analysis of engineering division fees was based on the work required to provide different services.

"Some went up and some stayed the same," he said.

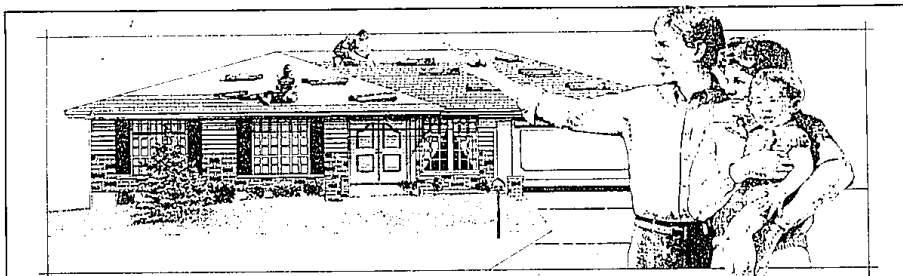
One of the larger increases was for a house move permit. That increase was one of 500 percent, or from \$35 to \$175.

Only six to eight such permits are issued each year, Biasell said.

"It does not represent necessarily a major revenue increase in that area to the city."

Some engineering division fees that remained the same include those for: site plan review, soil erosion permit, landfill permit and sidewalk permit.

"I think we're very comparable with other communities," Biasell said of the fee schedule. "Different communities charge things different ways."



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