



Loraine McClish (left) had something to celebrate last July when she learned she won the "Goo" prize at the annual Farmington/Farmington Hills Founders Festival Scholarship Pageant at Vladimir's banquet hall on Grand River. The pageant was a favorite event for Loraine to cover. At right is Observer receptionist Rose Butler.

SHARON LEHMEUX/staff photographer

McClish remembered for her vitality

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"Loraine was always a worker. She never had a problem handling anything that came her way," Zamotin said. "She would always say, 'I can do it.'"

During her illness, she never lost her spirit and never complained. She worked up until a few weeks before her death.

"She told me, 'Don't worry about it. I got it all figured out,'" Zamotin said, as she recalled the day Loraine called to say she was ill. "You never heard the bad side to anything."

Loraine carried adventure in her soul and was always ready to try something new, but never at the expense of others and their feelings.

One Observer staffer recalled Loraine's stories about parasailing behind a boat during a trip to Mexico. Over the years, she traveled to Germany and Austria, cruised the Caribbean, and visited the Middle East in the mid-1980s during a time of strife there.

"She told me, 'I'm going to the Middle East, I'm going to ride a camel and then I'll be home,'" her son, Greg McClish, recalled. "She said, 'Greg, can you believe that some people won't even cross Eight Mile Road?'"

Daughter Paula Heaney recalled the time last year, at age 65, when her mother went down a waterslide with 4-year-old grandson Mark. "She was a very energetic person," she said. "And always generous with her grandchildren."

LORAINA'S granddaughter Jennifer recalled that her grandmother "always had time" for her, said Kara Anderson, Jennifer's mother.

Family members recalled how interested Loraine was in learning. It didn't matter whether it was a class, an activity, a good book, an interesting conversation or interview for a story. "It was always, 'I've got to tell you what I learned,'" her sister said.

That need for learning spilled into the community and people she wrote about. Many of Loraine's community suspects at the newspaper were her friends first. Friends recalled Loraine's warmth, hearty laughter and knack for living.

My friend, my inspiration and an extension of my family," said Judy Antishin, adding that their friendship was so natural they couldn't remember when they first met.

"Many years ago she printed an article calling me 'Farmington-Farmington Hills Gourmet Cook in Residence.' She inspires me to go on and keep reaching for new goals. She printed everything about me, so I couldn't take the easy way out and turn back and give up," Antishin said.

"She was an extension of our family, and we all loved her. We have only happy thoughts of her. Our annual St. Patrick's party will be missing one person, but the big smile, hearty laugh and robust voice will be in our hearts," she said.

FRIEND Nancy Bates, who met Loraine years ago when beginning the Artstart preschool program, said Loraine's infectious laugh will keep the members alive. "I really remember her laugh, I'll miss that," Bates said. "She used to get everyone together — her daughters and even her mother — she had a very rich sense of family. I think she enriched all of us."

State Rep. Jan Dolan, who knew Loraine for years said: "She gave it all right up until the end. She was a real class lady."

Friends recalled her as a fighter whose spirit pulled her through the rough times, especially during her illness. Virginia Nicoli, a longtime friend and fellow member and officer of the Farmington chapter of the Older Women's League, talked of the weekend OWL conference the two attended in Lansing just two weeks ago.

Despite not feeling well, Nicoli said Loraine got right in and participated in the conference. "She laughed heartily at the jokes by the speaker and got involved in the workshop. Her heart was still in it," Nicoli said.

"She was warm, loving and caring. Her enthusiasm was boundless, which made her eternally young," Nicoli said. "It is a terrible loss for OWL and for us as friends."

ANOTHER COMMUNITY source

'I really remember her laugh, I'll miss that.'

— Nancy Bates
a friend

asked last week if Loraine owned the newspaper — she said she just assumed so because of the personal interest she took in her work and her community.

Senior adults in the Farmington community will long remember Loraine as someone who cared about them and showed it in her stories. "Her death is a great loss to the senior population. Her articles over the years showed her concern for their welfare. She was intuitive. She was lovely, entertaining and a great lady," said Loreita Conway, director of the Farmington Hills senior adult division.

Friends and business associates recalled her warmth and interest in their lives and projects. Former Farmington Observer editor Bob Sklar recalled Loraine's laughter and passion for the community.

"She had a terrific sense of humor and always seemed upbeat, finding the brighter side of what was happening in our ever-changing newsroom even as her illness took its toll. I'll remember her most, however, for her undaunted commitment to localizing coverage of lifestyle and social changes in the Farmington community."

Loraine was the first person colleague Corinne Abatt, former Observer-Eccentric Creative Living editor, met when she began her career. "I've lost a good, good friend. She was truly an amazing person."

Fellow staffers in the Farmington office remembered Loraine as the one who brought a calming influence to what can be a hectic business. "Peace at any cost" was her motto.

She had recently moved from Southfield to a house on a lake north of Clarkston where she found much peace in the past year.

Loraine grew up in Chicago, taking journalism classes at Northwest-

ern University and courses in the fine arts at the University of Chicago. She also worked as a writer for the civil service in the Air Force Morale Office in 1945-46.

After marrying commercial artist Cliff McClish in 1947, the couple settled in Detroit where they had their family. They later divorced and Loraine raised six children on her own.

A memorial service was held for the veteran journalist on Wednesday at the Godhardt-Tomlinson Funeral Home in Keego Harbor, with the family asking that donations be made to the Pontiac Unity Church.

She is survived by her mother, Myrtle Larson of Carrie, Ill.; six children, Greg McClish of Chicago, Judd McClish of Flint, Paula Heaney of Blue Springs, Mo., Debra Kalush of Davison, Mich., Kara Anderson of Detroit, and Marsha McClish of Wheaton, Ill.; seven grandchildren; sisters, Marjorie Bauschke of Mundelein, Ill. and Marion Zamotin of Miami Springs, Fla.; and a brother, Wallace Larson of Carrie, Ill.



BILL BRASLER/staff photographer

Loraine McClish received her 20-year award from Richard Isham, vice president/general manager of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, during a Christmas party at the Novi Hilton last December.



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Townhouse builder, city reach pact

By Susan Buck and Joanne Maliszewski staff writers

At long last, developer Melvin Kaftan, the city of Farmington Hills and local residents finally can agree on something.

Multiple-family housing of some sort will be built on the 14.5 acres on Drake Road, north of Grand River, that has been the center of a dispute over the city's industrial-research-office zoning for the past couple years.

"It was a real shock," said Brenda Kandt, an Independence Hills subdivision and member of Citizens Against IRO Zoning, about recent agreement on a consent judgment between the city and Kaftan.

"I do feel this will be all right in the sense that people buying into the townhouses would do so knowing they are aware of the light-industrial next to them," said Kandt, who led the latest two-year fight against IRO zoning on the Kaftan acreage. Kaftan has fought with the city

since 1986 on rezoning 14.5 acres of property from small office to IRO. He sued the city one year ago and updated his lawsuit earlier this year. The case was scheduled to go to Oakland County Circuit Court in August when city officials, Kaftan and his attorneys began forging an agreement.

KAFTAN WILL not seek monetary damages against the city even though he claims to have lost about \$100,000 per year awaiting decisions on the rezoning of his acreage, south of Hillside Estates Condominiums, north of Grand River and east of Drake Road.

"We would live with all the minimums (requirements)," said developer Kaftan.

Highlights of the consent judgment include:

- The site plan will be submitted and approved by the city council, not the planning commission.

- Distances between buildings or front, side or rear yard distances, will be determined by formula as stated in the zoning ordinance and

may be reduced by 20 percent at Kaftan's option, but with a minimum of 30 feet.

- The height of any building may be increased from 30 to 35 feet (not exceeding three stories). Elevations within 50 feet of the northerly property line cannot exceed two stories.

- The total number of rooms permitted may be increased by a maximum of 16 percent at Kaftan's sole option with a maximum of 12 1/2 units per acre. Access to the parcel located immediately to the east may not be required but may be permitted at Kaftan's option.

- Kaftan shall have the option to remove up to 20 percent of the trees on the site, including landmark trees.

- Kaftan may install up to an eight-foot wooden fence on or within 20 feet of the entire southern property line.

- The consent judgment has no provision for any wall or buffer on the northern side of the property. But city attorney John Donohue said Kaftan can put up a wall.

PTA membership drive today

The Farmington Area PTA Council is encouraging residents, parents and school staff to sign up as a member of a school Parent/Teacher Association.

Debbie Cornwell, PTA Council president, said 26 has been declared PTA Membership Day in the city of Farmington and that September is PTA Membership Month

across the country.

"We encourage people to sign up at their local elementary school," Cornwell said.

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