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Effie Downer recalls her days as a teacher of teachers. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

School days are recalled by veteran

By CRAIG PIECHURA

It's not an exaggeration to call Effie Downer "a teacher's teacher."

Because that's precisely what she did for almost 40 years in Detroit. Teach teachers how to teach.

And at the age of 93, Miss Downer still has definite ideas about her beloved profession.

Maintaining an apartment by herself in the Drakehire apartment complex in Farmington Hills, Miss Downer still remains active in the Delta Kappa Gamma Society, an international association of female educators.

If experience is any indication, Miss Downer should qualify as someone who knows something about education. She started her career in 1907 after graduation from Adrian High School, serving as a classroom teacher in one-room schoolhouses with quaint names such as the Pressed Brick School of Lenawee County.

It was in the one-room schoolhouse that Miss Downer decided she and the teaching profession needed upgrading.

"When I went to the rural school I can't remember one teacher I had

who'd graduated from high school," she said. "Most were just able people."

Miss Downer went on to receive her bachelor's degree in education from the Detroit Teacher's College and, in 1927, she received her master's degree in the discipline from Columbia University.

THE YEAR Miss Downer and two of her sisters moved into Detroit was 1917 — a boom year for Detroit schools.

"Just about that time Ford was beginning to pay \$5 a day for automobile workers," Miss Downer said. "That brought such an influx of people, the schools couldn't keep up. New schools would spring up where there wasn't even public transportation out that far to bring them there. I just got off the end of the (streetcar) line and walked the rest of the way to school. I was always a good walker. I had good training in the rural schools."

Miss Downer said her first assignment in the Detroit schools, before she went into teaching instruction, was at the Harris School, located in a German

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Will sound off

Tornado system set to howl

By CRAIG PIECHURA

Tornado sirens will sound for three minutes throughout most of Oakland County at 1:30 p.m. Thursday to educate citizens in emergency procedure.

There are two tornado sirens already installed in the city of Farmington and poles are up for nine sirens in Farmington Hills. The sirens should be installed by mid-May, according to Dave Manardo, an employee of Gale Electric, the company that won the bid to erect the sirens.

Oakland County officials pressed for a countywide network of early warning tornado sirens in the wake of a tornado which touched down in West Bloomfield, one mile north of Farmington Hills' border March 20, 1976. The twister took the life of a 16-year-old Bloomfield Township girl, Katelyn Weaver, and caused \$5 million damage to residential and business structures.

Federal matching funds for the tornado siren system were exhausted shortly after the program started, leading the county to pledge 25 percent of the cost of the sirens if the local cities agreed to pay 75 percent of the cost. The county's share of the cost of installing approximately 130 tornado

sirens is almost \$275,000, according to Gary Canfield, director of the Oakland County Emergency Medical Service Disaster Control Division.

The cities of Ferndale and Pontiac so far have chosen not to participate in the program, Canfield said, and sirens are lacking in sparsely populated areas such as Rose and Spring townships.

FARMINGTON'S cost for two sirens — one installed at Drake Road, between Grand River and Freedom and the other at Freedom and Maple — is \$13,459.

Farmington Hills City Council recently authorized the expenditure of up to \$65,000 to pay for nine tornado sirens. Canfield says Farmington Hills will be billed \$51,376 for sirens, poles and installation. Once the sirens are installed, maintenance and electricity bills are to be paid by the county.

Sirens in Farmington Hills will be located at Middlebelt and Liberty; Middlebelt and 10 Mile; Middlebelt and 1-696; Middlebelt and Northwestern; 11 Mile and Power; 11 Mile near the Old Homestead area; Halstead and 13 Mile; Farmington Road and 13 Mile, and a site north of Eight Mile, west of Halstead.

When the siren sounds Thursday, the county disaster control division encourages persons in homes, businesses and schools to act as if an actual tornado has struck.

The three-minute blast from the siren is exactly the same tone that would be sounded if there were an actual emergency, explains Canfield.

WHEN THE tornado siren signal is sounded, residents are advised to seek shelter immediately in the basement, interior room or lowest floor possible. If riding in a car or mobile home when the warning sounds, persons should run to a sturdy building or climb into a ditch or ravine and stay on the windward side.

Do not phone police or fire officials. Such calls can impede rescue efforts. Residents are urged to bring a battery-powered radio or a television to the shelter if possible.

But the main thing is to get under cover fast. Canfield says persons might want to open windows during a tornado watch but he advises against taking such precautions when the warning siren is blaring — meaning a tornado has been sighted.

"If the sirens are sounding, don't

even worry about that stuff," Canfield said. "Just go to some kind of shelter."

Too many people consider tornado training unimportant until it's too late, he said.

"We got calls from people in trailer parks asking what they should do last year when the sirens were blaring in the background," Canfield said. "That's a little late to be finding out these things."

SIRENS are considered necessary because it has been estimated that it takes an average of 30 minutes to notify half the population through the electronic media. The average tornado lasts about 10 minutes and, under ideal conditions, it takes about seven minutes to report official news of a sighting, according to a survey conducted by the Michigan State Police.

The switch which activates the sirens can be pulled at one of two locations — the National Weather Service office at Metropolitan Airport or the Oakland County Sheriff's Department in Pontiac.

And, unlike civil defense sirens which warn of attack, there are no "all clear" signals after the three-minute warning is sounded.



Memories of the 1976 tornado in the West Bloomfield area has spurred both Farmington and Farmington Hills to install tornado warning systems. (File photo)

Historical museum contributors named

Since launching its campaign for contributions to the new historical museum, the Farmington Historical Commission has received several contributions from residents totaling \$1,636.

The museum is housed in the Warner mansion, former home of Michigan Governor Fred Warner.

Persons interested in contribution should address their checks to the Farmington Historical Commission, David Bush, 210 Dr. and Mrs. Robert Barber, 225 Mrs. Blanche Gilson, 2100 Farmington 48024.

Those persons who have contributed are: Robert Cook, \$1,000; Mrs. Stephen Droegge, \$100; Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Mossamer, \$100; John and Shirley Richardson, \$50; Dorothy Fair, \$10; John McManus, \$10; Judith Blue, \$25; The Vivians Club of Farmington, \$100; Mrs. Vernon Fisher, \$10; Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Dermody, \$10; Mr. and Mrs. E.M. Cummings, \$50; Ms. Laura Peach, \$10; Farmington Historical Commission, David Bush, 210 Dr. and Mrs. Robert Barber, 225 Mrs. Blanche Gilson, 2100 Farmington 48024.

FARMINGTON HISTORICAL MUSEUM
The Governor Warner Mansion
33806 Grand River Avenue
Farmington, Michigan 48024

NAME
(Individual-Family-Organization-Business)

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

DONATION RECEIPT REQUESTED

PLEASE REGISTER THIS GIFT TO THE MUSEUM AS A MEMORIAL TO:

Make All Checks Payable To:
FARMINGTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MUSEUM TRUST FUND
(Return To The Address Shown Above)



Mike Chapman, co-owner of Mike and Tom's Pub, enjoys a break while talking about his life as a bartender. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

Mike Chapman is best barkeep

By CRAIG PIECHURA

The nominations are in and the judges have made their selection in the first and last annual Best Bartender in Town contest.

The envelope, please.

And the winner is Mike Chapman, co-owner of Mike & Tom's Pub, 31650 Eight Mile Road, Farmington Hills.

Wait a minute. Hold the fanfare. Put

away that ticker-tape, because there almost wasn't an official winner in the contest. When Chapman was first informed he was the winner, he let it be known in no uncertain terms he was embarrassed by the attention. It was a case of "Thanks, but no thanks."

It took some heavy prodding by his wife, Marie, and the neighbor lady who nominated him to convince Chapman

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Join the happy homemakers who've discovered O & E Classifieds

Household Goods are what Virginia Valliere had to sell. All it took was a phone call to start her O & E classified ad and to catch some buyers. My idea, no idea. I would get such fantastic response. Remember, one call does it all.

644-1070