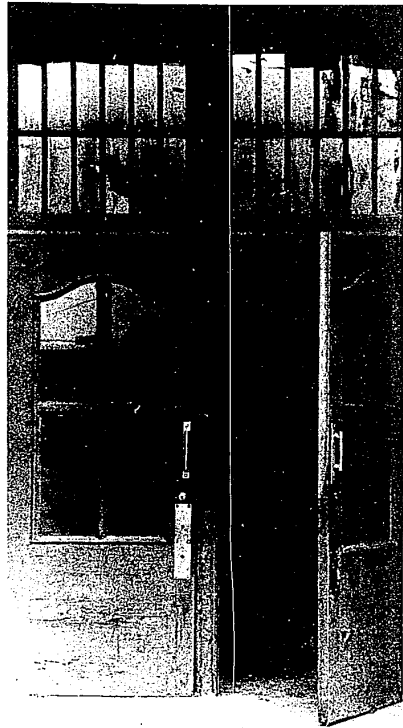


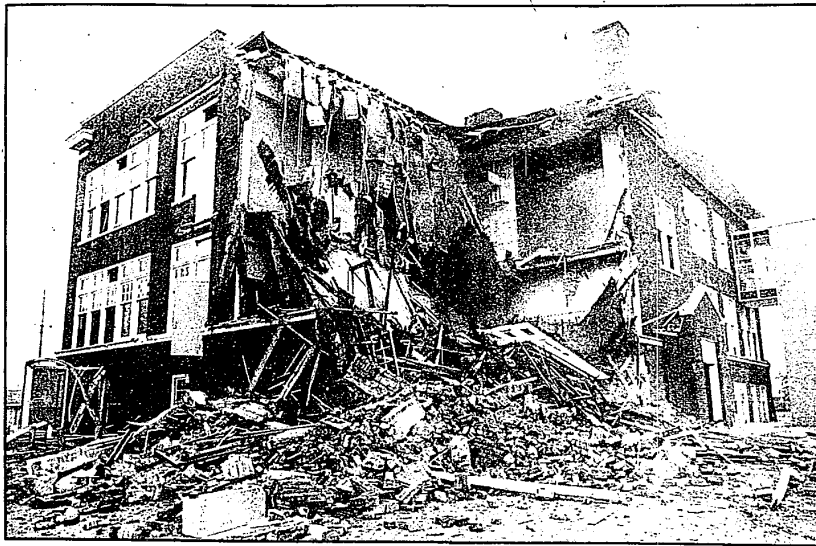
An era ends

Farmington Junior High falls to wrecker



With peeling paint and cracked window panes, the doors to Farmington Junior High stand open for the last time.

Staff photos by Randy Bost



Amidst the rubble, the remainder of the school waits for the wrecking ball.

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

They came to see an era end. Former students, their parents and the curious gathered to watch the wrecking ball demolish Farmington Junior High School.

In its wake will come construction for a senior citizens residence which may house some of the graduates of the 61-year-old building opened as a high school in 1918.

But late Friday afternoon, the focus of the crowd which watched the old school disintegrate was the delicate maneuvering of the crane operator.

The wrecking ball danced on top of the steel beams connecting the old junior high with the newer Farmington

Training Center.

With movie cameras and Polaroids poised, the onlookers craned to capture every last moment of the old school.

"My, look at that," marveled a bystander. "They're using that crane just as if they were hitting the building with a spoon."

As the wrecking equipment almost gently worked to disconnect the passageway connecting the training center with the old building and glass and steel crunched under the wrecking ball's weight, old memories stirred among the onlookers.

RON BELL, 45, looked at the demolished side of the school building and a devilish grin worked his way onto his

face.

"There used to be a tube to slide down in case of fires," he said pointing to one portion of the old gym.

"During fire drills all the boys would rush to get down the tube first so they could watch the girls go down," he said. Ralph Wixom, 66, grinned, too.

"Girls wore dresses in those days," he added quietly.

Wixom held on to his camera as he watched the building being torn down. Glancing up at the exposed side of the building he pointed to the upper story.

"We played basketball on the top there. There were wooden floors. The walls weren't there then.

"It was a fire trap," he added. Wixom graduated from the high

school in 1931.

"I went there all my school days. There were 31 in the class. Thirteen of them were from Livonia, Southfield and Novi."

General assembly took place in what was now a rubble-filled first floor. Each student had his own desk in the hall, Wixom recalled.

"Archie Leonard was superintendent then," he added.

TO REMIND him of those days, Wixom took a brick from the rubble.

Bell looked at the pile of bricks from which Wixom took his souvenir. Then he smiled again.

"There was many a day I'd like to (Continued on page 7A)

THE INSIDE * ANGLE

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

WILL THE REAL Willoughby Wink please stand up? If you're waiting to see Willoughby in person, stand in line behind those waiting until the ice cream cometh. Recently, a woman wandered into the Observer's office and spotted Wink's bumper stickers on the counter. "Who is this Wink?" she asked. After receptionist Debbie Kulka explained that WW was purely fictional, and a jousy politician to boot, the woman asked, "What about the free beer and pizza? Is that made up too?"

Yes, even the free beer and pizza are fake. WW is really too cheap to fork over the money for the edibles and potables.

Another WW believer came up to a staffer at a council meeting and asked in an oh-so-confidential tone to have Wink pointed out to him.

However, for true believers in WW, tickets for his Waffle Dinner are still available at the Farmington Observer office.

TALK ABOUT CROWDS. There were 480 people in Vladimir's the other day. The capacity crowd turned out to see the Farmington Community Center's fall luncheon and fashion show. The eighth presentation of the show was directed by Judy Antishin. She adamantly told everyone she was setting out to fill Vlad's to the ceiling and she did. Further details of the show are featured in today's A la Mode in the Suburban Life section.

THE FARMINGTON LaLeche League will conduct its monthly meeting at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 10. For further information, call Stephanie Bodack, 661-5814, or Janet Berman at 661-0166.

THE UNIVERSITY HILLS CHURCH will be the location of a meeting of Let's Unite Voters for Farmington Hills (LUV) at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 4. The church is at the expressway between 11 and 12 Mile roads. The pro housing group will discuss senior and family housing and taxes.

OH, THEM GOLDEN ARCHES may not last forever, although you can't seem to escape them, nowadays. McDonald Corp., father of Ronald and the skinny french fry, sponsored a design competition to discover what the hamburger restaurant of tomorrow will look like. The results will be on display at the School of Architecture at Lawrence Institute of Technology, 2100 W. 10 Mile. The exhibit will run from Oct. 8-19. The public is invited to see the drawings in the building's foyer from 8 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. (IA wonders if Big Mac hasn't picked from the competing "have it your way crowd.")

THE POPE may not make it to Michigan this time around but interested people can still see him

via an exhibit entitled "The Pope in Poland." The photos on display at the Pontiac Art Center, 47 Williams, were taken by Tony Spina in June.

The display will be open from 5-9 p.m. Oct. 10 when a reception will be given for Spina. The Art Center's regular hours are weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and weekends from 2-5 p.m. Pontiac Art Center is between Orchard Lake Road and M-59. For further information about the free exhibit, call 333-7849.

ALL RIGHT BAND BOOSTERS, prepare for Oct. 12-13 when the three Farmington High School instrumental music departments participate in collecting money for extras not included in the budget. Extras? IA heard you ask. These extras include scholarships, band camp, orchestra workshops, music banquets, photos, mailings, letters and refreshments. (And you thought they were raising money to have their cymbals gold plated.) Students wearing their school band uniforms will collect on those days in the area. A tag will be given for each contribution which entitles free admission to a concert of your choice. (Always anticipating your questions, IA will give you the concert schedule.) Harrison: 8 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 3; North Farmington: 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 9; Farmington 8 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 10. (And a big Angles' cymbal-crash to the parent volunteers working with the bands: KKKRRRRRAASSSSHHHH.)

THE LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF Michigan is looking for foster homes for Vietnamese Chinese refugee teens. Most of the teens have been separated from their parents. Others are orphans. More than 900 of them are in a camp in Malaysia.

Since 1975, the agency has resettled more than 300 In-Chinese families in Michigan through the sponsorship of congregations and groups. The agency has a bi-lingual consultant who is Vietnamese who will work with the foster families and the children. For further information, call the LSSM at 579-0333.

INSIDE FARMINGTON: Angles wandered over to one of the new restaurants in town, recently. It's nice to see a burned building renovated but in this case IA figures they should have stuck to the biblical "From ashes to ashes, from dust to dust." Angles isn't complaining that it ordered a medium burger which came to the table burnt. Angles doesn't even mind that the waitress took half the meal to deliver a bottle of mustard to the table. Angles even figures that most restaurant cola slaw sticks together in one frozen lump.

That's because this restaurant is obviously established upon tradition. Angles, of course, likes a good solid tradition. This one involves the traditional meaning of businessmen's lunch.

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