

## Suburban Life

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# Special birthday

## Forest students treated to Sesquicentennial year

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

Forest Elementary is blossoming with a newfound knowledge of Michigan.

Students from this Farmington Hills elementary are spending this school year with a variety of monthly learning themes as part of Michigan's Sesquicentennial celebration.

The year began with Tourism and Recreation in September coordinated by Jean Von Soosten, followed by Foods and Folklore in October with Judy Barclay and Fran Copp, History and Government with Ann Frankini and Mary Zerbosini in November and the Arts in December with Ellen Otto, according to Susan Patee, one of the coordinators and a fifth grade history teacher at Forest.

Planning for the state's 150th birthday began last May during a teacher inservice when Patee suggested the monthly themes. Many of them coordinated with holidays in the various months.

"A brainstorming session during lunch gave me ideas for each month," she said. "I presented the ideas at the inservice, and we were on our way."

ALTHOUGH EACH teacher has a specialty topic and an assigned month, the entire school is becoming involved in each month, Patee added. "Not only have we gained more Michigan spirit — but a special school unity. I'm really up for this Michigan thing."

The month of January was set

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aside for a special topic — Michigan Industry.

Coordinated by fourth grade teacher John Zelle, January brought a special lesson about business for the school and especially his class.

"Michigan has many industries, many ways in which people of Michigan are busy making things, growing things and serving one another," he said.

Each student selected a business, wrote a letter to his or her company, then using the information they obtained wrote a "Michigan Minute" — a report about each company which was read over the public announcement system each school day.

Students were also responsible for making a display for the school lobby telling about their businesses. The display changed daily.

Patee said the way Zelle handled his Michigan Industry month was special because he involved students in so many aspects of learning, from letter writing to public speaking.

ZEILE SAID some students have become so involved they have written to more than one company. "Some youngsters were so excited

about the project, that they wrote other companies just for the fun of getting a response," he said. Several students received "freebies," he said, including Hostess Cake of Livonia which sent several boxes of Twinkies, Vernor's Ginger Ale Co. of Detroit which donated some souvenir serving trays and locally-made ginger ale and Michigan Sugar Co. of Sebawing which sent — what else — sugar.

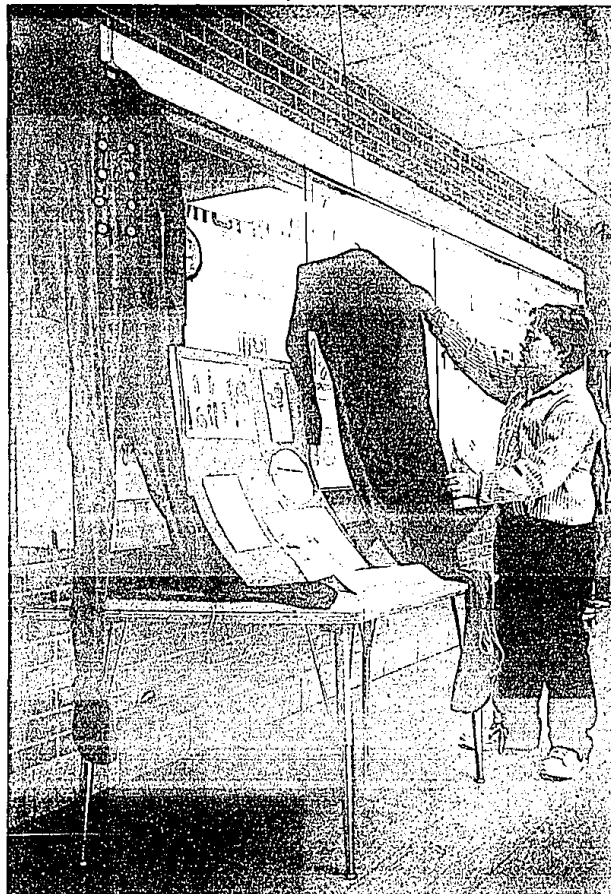
"This was a good learning experience for the kids, especially in the areas of written and oral communication," Zelle added. Both teacher and students were "pleased with their efforts."

In February students will look at Michigan Mammals, which Patee will coordinate. Dodge Harris looks at Famous People in March, Sally Wilson at Michigan Wildflowers and Birds in April, Roz Silver takes the theme Michigan is Great in May and Zerbosini and Frankini are looking to Sports for June.

The school has several special events scheduled, including one in May when a Sesquicentennial play written by teachers will be performed by the Forest student body at North Farmington High School.

The play's scenes are built around Michigan history and include 100 speaking parts and will involve a total of 150 students, Patee said.

"What I feel is so great . . . is that we are not just focusing on Michigan for one week or one month, but for one year," she added. ". . . to crowd everything into one month is not adequate."



Forest Elementary fourth-grader Terry Koval shows his project display which explains the Red Flannel Factory in Western Michigan.

Staff photos by Randy Borst



As part of the Michigan Industry studies, Koval reads a "Michigan Minute" over the school loudspeaker.

## Committee coordinates districtwide activities

Representatives from each Farmington school building have formed a committee to act as a clearinghouse for state sesquicentennial information, according to committee co-chairwoman Susan Patee.

Patee, a teacher at Forest Elementary, presented an overview of the committee's function before the school board Tuesday.

"We have sent out media and speaker resource lists to each building and have encouraged the buildings to make January 26 — statehood day — special," she said. "Farmington teachers have said 'Yes to Michigan,' and we're sure this will be a year our students won't forget."

The three high school bands will play at city and county sesquicentennial festivities today, according to district music coordinator Paul Barber.

In addition, three local Kiwanis groups — Farmington, Farmington Hills North and the Golden K — are donating flags to individual schools, according to Kiwanian Carl Dahlstrom who officially presented the school board with a flag Tuesday. Many of these will be used in ceremonies at local schools today. Following is a synopsis of sesquicentennial events at each school, as provided by the district:

• **FAIRVIEW CENTER** — Flags and buttons will be used during Michigan Week in May.

• **BEECHVIEW** — A flag-raising ceremony with band will be held today. Other activities during the year include a Michigan birthday party, a timeline of Beechview/Michigan families, the making of a Michigan quilt, an old-fashioned Michigan day, a spring concert, and Michigan on Parade.

• **EAGLE** — A school program today will include a speaker, flag raising, and readings of the best school papers written about Michigan. Throughout the school, special sesquicentennial shirts are being worn by students, a Michigan mural is being created, a map painted on the playground and a Michigan museum started in the media center.

• **FLANDERS** — During this birthday year, the school is working on an ancestry mural and has sent information about a Michigan family reunion project to the governor's office in Lansing. Today the school will have a flag presentation, apples for the students, a blueberry muffin breakfast for the staff and a display of Michigan products. Local historian and teacher Dave Litogot will speak.

• **FOREST** — A year-long program with monthly themes was started in September and will continue through June. A staff-written play about Michigan is planned for early May and staff members are compiling a book about the year that will be presented at the



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Creativity Springs Alive program in May. Dominos Pizza representatives will visit the school today for a special program.

• **GILL** — Teachers are sharing in a monthly theme to celebrate the sesquicentennial by updating the school showcase. Today students and staff are wearing red, white and blue, holding a flag-raising

ceremony and making a birthday card to Michigan. During February, which is Michigan Trivia Month, an assembly and songfest is planned.

• **KENBROOK** — Reports on Michigan are planned at this elementary where students are working on a 150-square quilt. A Michigan play and several field trips cel-

ebrating the sesquicentennial are planned. A Michigan breakfast is planned for May during Michigan Week.

• **LARKSHIRE ELEMENTARY** — The school is planning its festivities around Michigan Week in May.

• **LONGACRE** — A flag presentation and birthday party are planned for today. Gifted teachers are compiling a genealogy report. Each classroom has been assigned a different decade to discuss dress, inventions and happenings in Michigan. The state tree, a Northern Pine, will be planted on Arbor Day.

• **WILLIAM GRACE** — A state birthday party, assembly with poems and skit and a balloon lift are planned beginning at 1 p.m. today to celebrate the state birthday. A vocal music program is scheduled for Michigan Week in May.

• **WOOD CREEK** — A spring program with readings and a skit is planned.

• **WOODDALE** — Local historian and teacher Dave Litogot will speak at two assemblies. In May, a balloon launching is scheduled and staff is looking at a possible sesquicentennial parade with floats.

• **DUNCKEL** — A cake in the shape of Michigan will be served today as well as on-going events including a T-shirt and sweatshirt contest, Michigan Minutes presented by the school's drama class, his-

tory events over the public announcement system, and a display of Michigan books with information about authors. A spring concert also is planned.

• **EAST** — The art class is producing a poster, social studies teachers are showing a Michigan film and today several special events including flag dedication, Michigan march by the band and vocal music are being held.

• **POWER** — Special pins made by the art department and the colors of blue and gold will be worn by students today as they celebrate the state's birthday.

Michigan facts are being shared for a 25-day period and a poetry contest also is being held.

• **WARNER** — Individual teachers are including a unit about Michigan during the year and Michigan foods will be served in the cafeteria today.

• **FARMINGTON HIGH** — Social Studies teachers are developing a sesquicentennial reports throughout the year.

• **HARRISON HIGH** — This week cherry tarts will be served in the cafeteria and the film "I Am Michigan" will be shown to the staff.

• **DISTRICT MEDIA CENTER** — A bibliography of Michigan material for districtwide use has been prepared.