

Suburban Life

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Martha Himmelsbach, a 1917 Farmington High graduate, signs the guest register with help from friend Ruth McNichols, a local resident who has had four children graduate from the school.



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State Rep. Jan Dolan (left), R-Farmington Hills, talks to Farmington Hills resident Kay Briggs, who graduated from Farmington High in 1929. Kay's mother, Minnie Cox, was a 1898 graduate. Six of Minnie's brothers and sisters also were graduates. Kay's children, Robert and Diana, graduated in 1958 and 1962, respectively.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Five vintage automobiles graced the football field during the Farmington High centennial picnic Sunday. They were on view throughout the afternoon event. The car in the foreground is a bright red 1957 Chevrolet.

Century-old Farmington High celebrates 100 years

By Noreen Flack
special writer

MARTHA HIMMELSPACH graduated from Farmington High School in 1917. She was Martha Stamann then. She attended the original school, built in 1888, which had two floors. "The lower level was the grade school, and the upper level was the high school," she said. There were seven students in her graduating class: three girls and four boys. The boys enlisted in the Army and as soon as they graduated — they headed off to war. FHS is celebrating its centennial of the first graduating class of 1889. Past and present students, teachers and administrators gathered to celebrate during a family picnic on the school's football field Sunday. Himmelsbach, who lives in American House Retirement Residence in Farmington Hills, may have been the oldest alum at the century celebration, but everyone seemed 17 while reminiscing about his high school days. The original school was built in 1888 on Thomas Street, where

Farmington Training Center is now. It burned in 1918 but was rebuilt. The present building, at 32000 Shawwassee, was built in 1953. It will undergo renovation this summer. RENOVATIONS ARE estimated to cost \$3 million. They will include a new media center and a new entrance, principal Jerry Potter said. The school's chimney also will be torn down this summer — alumni bought a brick for \$1 at Sunday's picnic. The picnic included events in relays, volleyball, horseshoes and a tug of war. Potter was the first for the water dunk; students took turns at hitting the target. Hot dogs and pop were sold at 5 cents and 15 cents, respectively. Graduating class photos, diplomas and yearbooks were displayed and passed around during the day. Peter Schaldenbrand of Salem Township, from the class of 1957, now a mathematics and computer science teacher, organized the picnic. He said he felt good about being an underclassman again. Schaldenbrand said he planned for approximately 500 people to attend the picnic.

STATE REP. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, brought a message of good luck from Gov. James Blanchard for another 100 years of FHS. An old and antique car show zoomed up the field with cars such as a 1915 Buick and a 1954 Corvette convertible. Malen Terry of Farmington, from the class of 1959, drove up in his 1955 Chevrolet Bel Air and recalled that everyone had a car when he was in school. "I get in that car and I forget everything," Terry said. "I'm back in the '50s again." Ed Callan of Novi, class of 1942, pulled out his football team photo to recite the whereabouts of his football buddies. Fred Minke and his wife, Wanda Minke of Farmington Hills, met at Farmington High, both in the class of 1933. They have been married for 53 years. Wanda Minke remembers her class did not have a senior trip because of the Depression. Fred Minke went on to work at Thayer (now Thayer-Rock) Funeral Home in Farmington for 30 years.



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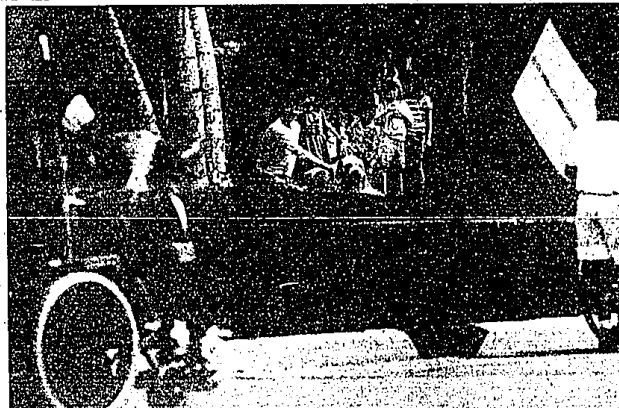
Farmington High principal Jerry Potter listens to state Rep. Jan Dolan read a state House resolution commemorating the school's 100 years.

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On parade

At left, during the parade of wheelchairs that circled residential areas in downtown Farmington May 16, Cora Kotcher holds the sign that says how much volunteers at Oak Hill Care Center in Farmington are appreciated by residents. Above, a Farmington Department of Public Safety car and Farmington High School Pep Band members lead the parade as it goes down Alta Loma. At right, Marty Gootzko (left), Maureen Surma, Malory Gootzko, Sarah Gootzko, Beth Harwood and Daisy the dog gather on a Gill Road lawn to watch the parade go by.



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