

'Civil War' kicks off festival

By Susan Buck
staff writer

JOHNN ROBERTS, re-enacting the Civil War as a member of the 7th Michigan Volunteer Infantry Company B Inc., demonstrated the use of anesthesiology during the Civil War era.

He pulled out rudimentary, multi-use medical instruments and knives from his black case during a medical demonstration at Heritage Park last weekend as he prepared to "operate."

The encampment, sponsored by National Bank of Detroit, kicked off the annual Farmington Founders Festival which continues through the end of this week.

Farmington gave 37 volunteers to the Civil War. Some 23 of those volunteers never came back. Many enlisted at the Botsford Inn.

After a large battle, one surgeon often cared for 500 to 1,000 men.

"Setting of the wounded," as Roberts called it, set some quick medical priorities regarding which soldiers were treated first and which were literally placed to the side to die.

If the anesthesiologist was busy, the surgeon beckoned whoever was nearest to his side to observe, Roberts said.

CHLOROFORM OR ether was placed on a cloth about a half inch from the patient's face.

"The anesthesiologist would look at the constriction of the eyes and



Candy Sdunek, dressed as a Union soldier, provides some music at the Civil War encampment.

feel the pulse," Roberts said, as he demonstrated the method used to determine how many drops of ether to use. "He'd say to his assistant, 'Now you've had your lesson: Go to it.'"

Many Civil War surgeons were not licensed to practice medicine and were educated in a "learn as you go fashion."

With a small group gathered around, Roberts produced the contents of his doctor's satchel. Among the items it held were: poppy tea for pain, a scalpel/ink scraper used for slow cuts and to puncture abscesses or give small pox vaccinations, ginger for tonic and bulimite of mercury for stomach distress.

"Every recruit had to have a smallpox vaccination," Roberts said.

Enemas, consisting of a quart of water every hour, were administered by a four foot stretch of hose and a funnel, Roberts said.

Saturday's skirmish between the Confederate and Union armies drew both interested spectators as well as those with a hunger to learn more about the Civil War as a hobby.

"Twenty five percent of the soldiers died from illness, not casualty," Lt. Mike Garr of the Farmington Hills fire department said, as he watched the mock battle.

"They died from germs and cholera. Sanitary habits were not progressed," Garr said.



Rita Warren, 12, of Wyandotte, is dressed in a costume of the period to participate in the Civil War activities.

ROBERTS, who resides in Jonesville, Mich., gave credence to that statement when asked how often surgical instruments were cleaned.

"Every fifth patient had their cleaned," Jones said. "Water from the local creek was fine enough."

Although Lt. Garr is not a reenactor, he is a member of the Michigan Regimental Roundtable, a group dedicated to studying the Civil War and meets the last Monday of every month at the Farmington Community Library on 12

Mile Road in Farmington Hills.

The group travels to both known and obscure historic sites of the Civil War. "So many things are in people's backyards," Garr said.

And, while Southern homeowners may object to large groups of tourists tramping across their property, they are more willing to allow groups like the Roundtable to come in and catch a glimpse, Garr said.

Firefighters were among the first to step forward as volunteers in the Civil War, Garr said. They were called Zouaves. It was the war that divided a nation and pitted brother against brother.

The greatest battle of the Confederate side was Shiloh, Garr said.

"The Union soldier was able to be outfitted. There was no end to the money Abraham Lincoln saw to that."

The battle at Gettysburg was fought after Confederate soldiers, drawn to the location because they heard there were more, went up against Union soldiers, Garr said.

This year's encampment focused on an unknown soldier, who is wounded in battle and late one in the hands of a Union Army surgeon. He was convicted and buried in a Civil War military funeral.

Although the Civil War ended more than 125 years ago, its legacy lives on through folklore and legends which are kept alive by the 7th Michigan Volunteer Infantry Company B Inc., a non-profit Civil War re-enactment organization.



photos by PAUL HURCHMANN/staff photographer

Tim Sheehy, a Farmington resident dressed as a Union soldier, cooks up his breakfast at the Civil War encampment at Heritage Park in Farmington Hills Saturday.



School isn't out at the Civil War encampment. Youngsters (from left) Amy May, 8, of Port Huron, and Katie Everett, 5, of Lansing, do their lessons during a mock school session.

Cotton to lead school board

By Casey Hana
staff writer

Two-term trustee and retired athletic director Jack Cotton took the reins of the Farmington school board Monday for his second one-year term as that body's president.

Cotton replaces outgoing president Susan Rennels, whom he praised for handling "this mine field you've walked through in this past year" which included staff layoffs, budget cutbacks and a failed millage effort.

"All this just doesn't happen," he said. "It's been a year of great leadership."

"We've had a lot of peaks and valleys," he added.

Elected vice president for the 1991-92 school year was longtime board treasurer Jack Inch, putting him in line for the next president's slot if traditions are followed. Catherine Webb was re-elected board secretary and Helen Ditzhary will serve as the new treasurer.

In her outgoing comments, Rennels called for a push to bring information to the public in a "timely

manner" and for continued community involvement. "It has been a difficult year," she said. "Our years have been piling up that way. Change has become the norm, rather than the difference."

BOTH RENNELS and Cotton praised superintendent Michael Flanagan for his expertise and leadership.

Also during Monday's meeting, Cotton brushed off criticism from board watcher Lorne Leon, who reiterated his concern with the school district continuing the contract of Kingsley Cotton, Jack Cotton's son, as school attorney.

"It has the appearance of conflict of interest and nepotism," Leon said. Leon also suggested the board should consider pulling the attorney's payment out of the treasurer's report as a line item so Cotton could effectively vote.

"I understand what you're saying," Cotton said. "I don't agree with a word you've said." Cotton obtained, as he has in past years, on the vote to approve the legal contract, and said he would consider not vot-



Jack Cotton

ing on treasurer's reports which contain payments to the attorney.

In addition to Kingsley Cotton's appointment, the board also approved a contract with the firm of Baty, Lewis, Holland and Page for specialty matters. Flanagan said he made the recommendations because the district had a "high level of satisfaction" with each firm's performance.

"We used those firms long before Mr. Cotton was on the board," he added.

Trustees ask for skateboarding ban

By Casey Hana
staff writer

An increase in possibly dangerous skateboarding and "rollerblading," the new style of roller skating, has prompted Farmington school trustees to request that Farmington and Farmington Hills city councils ban such activities on school property.

"Somebody is going to be seriously injured," said trustee Jack Inch. "They're going to hit somebody and there's going to be one dead person."

"This would be a preventative ordinance. Kids have gotten very good on them, including my own kids," added superintendent Michael Flanagan referring to skateboards. "They're not used as they were originally intended."

The school board discussed the matter Monday, after Farmington City Council members had tabled the issue in May to await word from the school board. The board voted 5-0, with trustee Helen Ditzhary abstaining, to ask the cities to take action. Ditzhary said she could not vote for a request which included skateboarding, but did not give a reason why. Trustee James Abernethy was absent.

THE ISSUE was first raised by Debbie Cornwell, Farmington-Area PTA Council president and past president of the Longacre Elementary PTA, where problems were noticed. Cornwell told the city she and other parents had noticed a problem with older students using school parking lots and curbs as skateboard jumps, and were concerned about the safety hazard.

Other problems have occurred at Farmington High School, school officials said. Don Cowan, director of building and student services

for the district, said there is also a concern with rollerblades, skates with rollers in one row, especially as they are used on the tennis courts and athletic tracks. "They can cause great damage," he said.

The school district is requesting a ban on skateboarding, rollerblading and also roller skis, artificial snow skis which are used off-season. "It doesn't limit the cities from going farther, if they want to," added trustee Susan Rennels.

TRUSTEE HELEN Plutov noted concern that if the activities were banned, children would have few places to play. "If we block off school property to skateboards and rollerblades that leaves the street closed off," she said.

Resident and parent Joe Svoke wondered "where do you draw the line, and what do you prohibit? I don't really want them (school properties) torn up, but I don't want them (skateboards, rollerblades) in the streets either."

Farmington city officials have said they are willing to consider a change in the law, but on private property, such as school grounds, they must have permission to enforce the law.

A suggested ordinance has already been drafted to prohibit skateboarding and roller skating in the city's central business district and on any other city or private properties open to the public without written permission. The draft would allow skateboarding and roller skating in sidewalks in residential districts, but require those using the sidewalks to take care and caution.

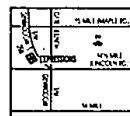
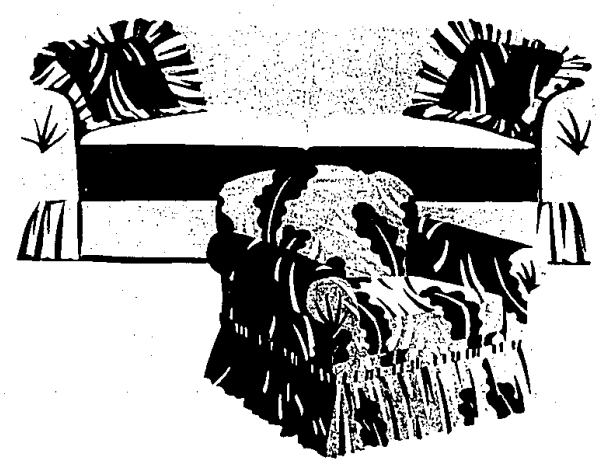
The proposal calls for nonjouncing of the skateboard or roller skates pending prosecution as a standard misdemeanor.

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