

### CHAT ROOM



Dave Lifogot

## Historical bits reveal much of our beginnings

Farmington Hills is celebrating its 25th anniversary this weekend, and the Warner Mansion is refurbishing its image to the community. The community has a lot of old houses and a lot of green (historical marker) signs.

For many residents of the area, this is all they know about Farmington history. The experts on the subject are the members of the historical commissions and society and third grade teachers and students.

Here, as a public service, I'll enlighten you with some bits of history that will astound your friends and impress everyone else.

### Named for founder

The first names of the area were Powerville and Quakertown, named for the founder Arthur Power and the religion of the first residents.

Arthur Power bought land here in 1823 for \$1.25 per acre. He had two wives and 13 children.

These Farmington Quakers, formally called the Society of Friends, established the first Quaker meeting house in Michigan.

The first Founders Festival was in 1965.

When Farmington Township was

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## Now ...



## ... and then



Twins: Janet Spinner, left, and Joyce Hodess at age 5 (above) and today (in top photo).

## Twins convention lures them annually

■ The Michigan Twins Association convention is June 27-28 in Livonia. These Farmington Hills twins haven't missed one in 52 years.

When the 52nd annual convention of the Michigan Twins Association meets in Livonia June 27-28, Joyce Hodess and Janet Spinner of Farmington Hills will be there, as they have been for every other twins convention for the past half century plus two years.

The 68-year-old twins not only look alike and sound alike, they share other similarities. Married just nine months apart at the age of 20, each is the mother of three grown children. Each has two daughters and a son. Janet has six grandchildren, Joyce has five.

"Three of our kids were born on the 18th and three of our grandkids on the 16th," said Janet.

When the sisters talk, they often finish each others' sentences. They both enjoy crocheting as a hobby and have worked as volunteers for the Red Cross for 30 years.

They were born on April Fools Day to a mother who had no idea she was carrying twins. One gets the feeling Joyce and Janet have been fooling folks most of their lives. They have one brother, Sheldon Beckman, just 15 months older.

"We always wore the same dresses and were in the same classrooms in school," said Janet. The sisters grew up in Detroit near Hamtramck. They took dance lessons for years and have done dance routines at the twins conventions.

"We share everything but husbands," her sister added. "We eat the same food, like the same clothes."

"We didn't play pranks when we were kids. We were so naive," said

Joyce. "We were never allowed to go on dates without a chaperone, even to the prom."

Janet is divorced. Joyce will celebrate her 47th wedding anniversary to Joseph Hodess on July 3. They met at a Jewish center dance, and Joyce was impressed because Joseph had a car and bought her a raffle ticket for a radio, which she didn't win.

"Mother heard about the twins convention over the radio in 1946," said Joyce. "Her ladyfriend had twin boys about the same age."

Janet remembers "We were 16 and wore pinstripe suits and silk stockings. That was a big deal then."

The Michigan Twins Association was formed by John and Jake Omedian, who still attend conventions every year. In addition to Joyce and Janet, twins Rita and Martha Mobilnicki have also attended every convention since 1946.

As young women, Joyce and Janet appeared in some print advertisements including a spot to introduce the dual mirror feature in 1946 Chevrolet models.

Their picture appeared in the newspaper flanking singer Frank Sinatra in the late 1940s. Joyce presented Sinatra with a loving cup award from the International Youth Committee for promoting interracial and intercultural understanding.

Each woman has piles of photographs from twins conventions spanning the past half century. In addition to the Michigan convention, they attend the International Twins Convention in Twinsburg, Ohio every year. There they've met twins married to other twins, twins who look exactly alike and twins who don't bear much of a resemblance. Their favorites are always the young twins.

Please see TWINS, B2

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