

Project will raise curtain on new Players theater

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Players want their barn, but they want to make it better.

That means tearing down the theater and building a new one. The 120 members in the group are excited about plans for a new facility, which will seat 242 people and provide barrier-free access.

The 5,917-square-foot theater is part of a proposed planned unit development that also includes a 76-unit assisted living center on 12 Mile Road, east of Kendallwood.

Farmington Hills City Council approved the site's planned unit development qualification. The final plans, which are being negotiated, have not been OK'd yet.

Although the players' existing theater - an actual barn - will be torn down, the new building will take on a farm-like shape.

"It will be a barn. We feel that's crucial to our identity," said Cynthia Tupper, Farmington Players president.

With some help from Sunrise

'We've been down there and rehearsing during the summer. It clearly rings home that we need another facility. It limits what we can do comfortably because it's so hot.'

*Cynthia Tupper
Players president*

Development - the company proposing the assisted living center - a new theater will cost \$900,000 to build. So far, the community organization has raised nearly \$450,000.

The rest will have to come through pledges and donations, Tupper said. The group is working with the Michigan Council of the Arts on ways to raise money. "If we can reach that halfway mark, we feel really confident," Tupper said.

Farmington Players simply outgrow the current facility where the group has performed since the late 1950s. The current

theater seats anywhere from 161 to 173 patrons.

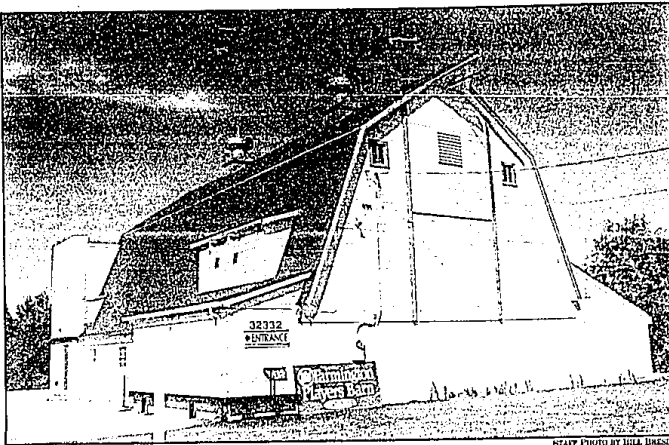
As part of a project with Lawrence Technological University, the volunteer group looked into ways to renovate the venerable theater. However, the LTU study concluded the barn was not worth renovating.

In addition to a lack of barrier-free access, the theater is not air-conditioned and difficult to keep warm during the winter, Tupper said.

The community theater group is in its 45th season and members are busy with a musical review that includes show appearances from "Guys and Dolls" and "Brigadoon" among others. The group has 1,000 season ticket holders.

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STAFF PHOTO BY BILL LINDSEY

Plans: The Farmington Players will get a new theater with a developer's plans to build an assisted living facility nearby. The estimated cost of a new theater is \$900,000. The group has raised \$450,000.

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Focus Teens find confidence with special class

By TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER
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Before taking the Dale Carnegie for Teens class in Farmington Hills, Lauren Longton was doing OK in school. But she wasn't particularly focused.

It wouldn't be correct to say she wasn't achieving what she expected to because she hadn't

really set personal goals. But all of that changed because of the Carnegie teen class, which taught her to overcome self-doubt and turn it up a notch in areas pertinent to school success - such as assertiveness, self-confidence, plus memorization and organization skills.

"I'm not embarrassed to raise my hand in class because I'm not

worried that other people think about me," said Lauren, a 14-year-old freshman at Northville High School. "Because I know I'm a good person. Carnegie taught me that."

She now has that all-important focus and sets goals on a regular basis. Her social life is better, too.

Other teens soon have an opportunity to pick up some of those same skills. Beginning Tuesday, Oct. 13, another session of the Carnegie teen class is scheduled to begin. The 12-week course, taught by Sue Dahlmann, will be at 26105 Orchard Lake Road, Suite 103, in Farmington Hills. Call (810) 220-8812.

Another teenager who benefited from taking Carnegie is Jonny Tosoian of Farmington Hills, whose mother, Kathy, is a course instructor. Jonny, a Farmington High School student, took the program in 1996 and will volunteer during the upcoming session.

"We talk about goal setting (in the course)," Kathy Tosoian said. "And that's real important. They can start the school year and say, 'This is what I want to

'I'm not embarrassed to raise my hand in class because I'm not worried what other people think about me. Because I know I'm a good person. Carnegie taught me that.'

*Lauren Longton
—Student*

accomplish in the next marking period."

"Kids who don't set goals are less apt to be successful because they don't know where they're headed."

Meanwhile, Tosoian said there's a correlation between good self-confidence, which Carnegie attempts to build, and efficient study habits. "Because of their self-esteem improving, their work habits improve. They feel better about what they do."

She added that the course helps teens enhance memorization via a system of being able to "better associate things" needed for tests, and then to apply them.

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