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CHAT ROOM



MARY RODRIQUE

New U.S. citizen joins diverse mix

My husband is an American. This is the first time I can say that in 20 years of marriage. Last Thursday morning in the Theodore Levin Federal Courthouse in downtown Detroit, Dennis took the Oath of Citizenship amidst a mini United Nations.

There were emigrants from China and Egypt, Honduras and Palestine and just about every geographic area in between.

'You are united in your common citizenship.'

Lawrence Zatkoff
—Chief Judge

Dennis is from our closest neighbor, Canada. Born in Montreal to French-speaking parents, he spent most of his formative years just across the border in Windsor.

Dual perks

Being a dual-citizenship household had its perks. While in Canada, I could answer the door when a local politician came stumping with the perfect line: "Sorry, I'm not Canadian." Amazing how fast that stopped the spiel. We are a family that knows all of the words to "O, Canada" and "The Star Spangled Banner," that can proudly fly the Stars and Stripes alongside the red maple leaf.

Ultimately, it was the right to vote that spurred my husband to seek U.S. citizenship. He was a little disappointed Monday afternoon at the Canton Township clerk's office when a worker only wanted to see his driver's license before issuing the much anticipated voter registration card.

In four years, he and our two teenage daughters will be eligible to cast their votes for president — all three of them for the first time.

The swearing in ceremony is something that occurs every day in federal courthouses coast to coast. But to see the process firsthand was a moving experience made sweeter with family and friends at our side.

Among the 72 new citizens before U.S. District Court Judge Arthur Tarnow: a young lady from Pakistan in regal native dress, a petite Chinese woman and an Indian man who bowed gracefully to the judge as he received their naturalization papers, a woman from Israel who wore a corsage with a red, white and blue ribbon, and several young children, including the little boy who exclaimed, "Judge Joe Brown!" as the justice entered the room.

From many countries

They also came from Iran, Iraq, Russia, Syria, Albania, Germany, Dominican Republic, Yemen, Jordan, Bulgaria, Indonesia, Philippines, Yugoslavia, France, Romania, Columbia, Vietnam, Kampuchea, Spain, and Nigeria. America is still a melting pot.

I thought back to five years ago, on a family trip to New York. We toured Ellis Island, which had just undergone massive restoration. All four of my grandparents as young single adults from Poland had immigrated to America through Ellis Island in the early part of the Twentieth Century. It brought a lump to my throat to stand in the same cavernous hall to remember their great personal sacrifices. Walking from exhibit to exhibit, I read about the Poles, the Irish, the Italians and others who came in droves in search of the American dream, this melting pot of humanity.

Each new citizen Thursday received from Chief Judge Lawrence Zatkoff which said, in part, "There are many people sitting with you as new citizens today; they may have original languages, religions and traditions that are different from yours, but today and for the rest of your lives you are all the same — united in your common citizenship. The ties that bind you in that sameness must never be forgotten. "We wish you happiness as you continue to share in the blessings and the responsibilities of citizenship in this great and diverse nation."

Truer words were never spoken.

(Mary Rodrigue is the Farmington HomeTown Life editor.)

Journals bring early Farmington alive

BY RUTH MOEHLMAN
SPECIAL WRITER

Lillian Drake Avery was a writer who documented Farmington's part in the Underground Railroad in 1916.

Avery interviewed people who could remember the secret activity that had taken place over 60 years earlier — the network that helped escaping slaves find sanctuary before the Civil War.

Avery was secretary for the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society. Her paper on the Underground Railroad was presented at the Daughters of the American Revolution meeting. She was a charter member of the General Richardson chapter in Pontiac.

Born in Farmington on Nov. 22, 1856, she was a member of the pioneer Drake family of Farmington. Drake Road is named after them.

An artist

The daughter of Francis Marion Drake and his wife, Sarah Elizabeth Chadwick Drake, she was a painter. Her parents had lived in a house in the village of Farmington until 1851 when they bought a small farm on the north-south road (Power). The farm was almost 15 acres and cost \$600. There the Drakes nine children were born; eight lived to adulthood.

In 1985, another Farmington historian, Jean Fox, was shown old manuscripts, watercolor pictures and unpublished papers that Lillian Drake Avery had written and painted. The folios were in the attic of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society. The papers and pictures were then published by the Farmington Hills Historical Commission.

In her charming remembrances Lillian Avery records how her father supplemented the family income with a little farm. There the family had fresh vegetables. Orchards provided apples which were sold to a French apple dealer from Detroit. The broker sent a crew



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BEZLER

Historic home: This farm house on Power Road was built in 1870 by Francis Drake on the foundation of an earlier house that burned.

to harvest the apples. This crop supplied money for shopping trips to Detroit. There cloth was purchased. At that time, circa 1860, there were no ready-made clothes. Other household items and small luxuries were also bought, including toys.

Neighborhood adventures

Lillian Avery recalled other adventures as a child in pre/post Civil War Farmington. She remembered her school, playmates and neighborhood activities. There were misadventures as the children played in the barn. She cut her hand on some equipment. Years later she remembered the mis-

chievous boys who destroyed some of the family's farm produce. Other boys tormented girls at the swimming hole.

She drew a map illustrating where the race track was on the property that is now part of Our Lady of Sorrows Church. The map shows the location of the neighbors of her youth. Lillian Drake attended high school in Chelsea. Farmington had no high school then.

High school graduation qualified her to teach school at 16. She met Aaron B. Avery in Chelsea. They were "betrothed." She taught at the Green School in Farmington Township and was principal of the primary department of the Farmington Union School about 1875-79. Aaron Avery attended

medical school at the University of Michigan.

They were married on Oct. 22, 1879. Married women did not work outside the home then. The couple's two daughters were born in Farmington. In 1885, they moved to Pontiac where Lillian joined organizations and contributed numerous historical writings.

Her personal memories and watercolors were unpublished until 1985, 55 years after her death in 1930. By this time, they had become significant in local history. Lillian Drake Avery is now recognized as one of the earliest Farmington historians.

Ruth Moehlman is the author of *Heritage Homes of Farmington*.



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL BEZLER

Chatting: Doris Boring and Leonard Gallagher talk about the last dance they learned. Above right, instructor Bill Peterson.

Line dancing gives seniors fun workout

It's great exercise, it's got a funky beat and you can dance to it. So put on your cowboy hat and boots (or not) and join fellow seniors at Line Dancing classes at the Costick Activities Center.

Senior Programmer Chris Hebert said the Line Dancing class currently underway at the Farmington Hills center is popular. So popular that a second session will begin on May 9.

Instructor Bill Peterson draws from 25 to 35 dancers, mostly women, to

weekly sessions on Mondays from 1:10 to 2:40 p.m.

"It's a very good workout, especially for someone who doesn't like aerobics or is bored with walking for exercise," said Hebert.

The second class will run on Wednesdays May 9 through May 30 from 1:15 to 2:45 p.m. Cost is \$10 for all four classes or \$3 per class.

For more information on Line Dancing at the Senior Center, call 473-1830.



Made for dancing: Fancy boots aren't necessary (left) but add some style to your swing. At right, Mary Gauder gets into the spirit of things.



Korean War era vet joined Air Force, Army

I grew up during the Depression and World War II. There was gas and food rationing. There were difficult times, but in other ways helped many of us develop character and ideals.

In 1949, my junior year of high school, five of us decided to join the Naval Reserves at the Gross Pointe Naval Station. My birthday wasn't until back when I was 17.

On Jan. 8, 1950, I enlisted in the Air Force Reserves and was assigned to the 439 Troop Carrier Wing, training to be an aircraft mechanic. I learned my

trade on a C-46 twin engine aircraft. The C-46 was a workhorse; it could carry more cargo or paratroopers than a C-47.

The Korean War started while I was still in school. I received a letter to go on active duty in April 1951, and was granted a delay to finish school. I graduated on June 15, 1951 and was in my uniform on duty at 8 a.m. June 16. My group wing had already left Selfridge AFB. The Air

Force sent me to Orlando, a mixed base of Army and Air Force service people.

I worked for the Air Inspector doing typing movie theater and concession stand on base. One day, three of us received transfers to Jacksonville Recruiting and Induction station. I worked with two soldiers who had survived the

Death March of Bataan in which 10,000 troops surrendered in the Philippines in World War II.

The station was for new recruits to join or be inducted. I typed medical reports, filed papers and drove a staff car for the major and chief warrant officer. After a day's work of producing many tasks, I would get the Army Greyhound bus and take all the black inductees to their side of town and put them in a hotel to be picked up the next day. At this time in the south, African Americans couldn't stay in a

Please See KOREAN WAR, C7