

Junior high meets its wrecker

(Continued from page 3A)
 see it (the school) torn down — back when I was in it."
 "Now, it's come too late," Wixom added.
 Bell laughed.
 Wixom looked at the building and gave his approval to the senior housing which will replace it.
 "It's a good idea to put it to some use," he said.
 "I'd probably consider living in it someday."
 By himself in the field adjoining the school yard Larry Lutzen stood over the movie camera he had balanced on a tripod.
 "I hate to see it go down. But it's for a good cause — I think it's great," he said of the new senior housing.
 "But I don't care for the one on Freedom Road. This one is strictly seniors. I don't like the low-cost housing on Freedom. I don't think it's an appropriate location for it," he said.
 LUTZEN didn't attend the old school on Thomas and School streets. But his daughters did. It was for them that he

was standing in the field during the two afternoons the wrecking crew worked on the building.
 He recorded the building's demise on film. He had managed to obtain the lintel to the door of one daughter's old home room. The room number was still on it, he confided with pride. When the school administration sold the desks from the junior high, Lutzen bought some of those.
 The destruction of the building loomed on the horizon for several years.
 It was closed by the Board of Education in April, 1976. The year before, students at the junior high formed a committee to save their school. The effort, which involved supporting a millage election, was spearheaded by students who handed out flyers in the shopping centers and babysat so mothers could go out to vote.
 But the effort only postponed the closing for a year.
 Alton Bennett, now principal of East Junior High School, was the last principal of Farmington Junior High.
 Two years after it closed, the Board

of Education began negotiating the sale of the building to Forest City Dillon, Inc. The firm planned to develop a senior citizen complex on the site.
 BY DECIDING to sell the property, the board ended the history of school at that site.
 The first school on that corner was built by Nathan Power in 1852 for \$729. The building was moved to the corner of Warner and Power and later housed a factory for drying apples.
 After the first school was moved, the Farmington Union School was erected on the site in 1888. Farmington Union burned down in early January, 1918.
 Newspaper accounts of the time recount how the janitor on his way to start the furnace saw flames coming from the building. By the time the fire department arrived, the entire building was engulfed and nothing could be saved.
 In the same year, another school was constructed on the site. It eventually became the last school on that corner.
 The building, designed by architect Charles Fisher, was used as a combined junior and senior high.



Blowtorching off a section of a steel beam Farmington Training Center consumed a portion of Friday afternoon's operation.



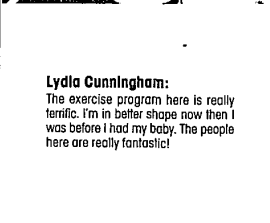
A worker (above) walks past the rubble which once was a wing of Farmington Junior High School. Debris flies from the school (right) as the wrecking ball meets the brick walls. (Staff photos by Randy Bors)

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