The Farmington Players start small and end up big

The Farmington branch of the American Association of University Women never would have believed that its small, dramatic study group would one day grow into the Farmington Players, one of the longest running annatur theaters in the Detroit area. The group was formed in 1951. Initially it performed shows in various schools and churches. Meetings were held in individual's homes. Then in 1955, the Farmington Players we're able to lease an old dairy barn on 12 Mile Road.

Mile Hoad.
"The barn came complete with stalls, hay lofts and a milking room," said long-time member Ellie Jorgen-

sen. "Of course, we began fixing it up right away so that it now bears little resemblence to a dairy barn." Today, the playhouse contains a prop shop, costume room; basement re-hearsal area, a meeting area and an auditorium which seats 178 people.

"THE EARLY SHOWS had pigeons to contend with," laughed Walter Jorgensen. "When the farmhouse was sold in 1958 the Players were given the option to buy the barn. Twelve members put up their own money to purchase the property."

Through the hard work of its dedicated members, the Players were able to transform the old barn into a modern facility.

"Wo're very pleased with the fact that we are entirely self-supporting," Mrs. Jorgenson said. "We receive no grants or gratuities. Nobody gets paid for anything. Everything we do is for the love of it, and we do it ourselves." In addition to transforming the barn into the theater, the Players recently irreprofed the entire building and re-placed the auditorium chairs with the-aters seating.

ater seating.

The group now has 125 members.

Approximately 50 participate on a giv-

"IT'S SUCH A BIG JOB to do," Mrs. Jorgensen said. "We really need all of these people to work on every show." Jobs such as house chairman, hospitali-

ty chairman, set dressing and parking are only a few of the positions filled by company members.

The job of costume designer has been filled by an original member, Hope Mastoli. Our costume shop is quite complete," said Mrs. Jorgensen. "We have everything that you can imagine from every period and in eyery size and color. Hope will take anything and everything from our costume shop. The Players also rests costumes to other theater groups.

"This group has an interesting array

"This group has an interesting array of people," member Ron Turek said.

"We all have a common interest: the

Among its members are lawyers, teachers, engineers and computer ana-

lysts.
"All groups have camaraderie,"

added Jorgensen, "but it's a nice group of people to work with, a social group covering all ages from 19 to 70.

The Jorgensens have been involved with the Players for about 11 years. "Walt became involved with the Players even though has had no aspirations to be on stage," Mrs. Jorgensen said. "He'll stage manage, build sets and sell tickets. There's always something to do."

COMPANY MEMBERS come from

COMPANY MEMBERS come from Royal Oak, Birmingham and Detroit, though the majority are from Farming-ton and Bloomfield.

The group puts on three major pro-ductions each season and a summer specific properties of the season and a properties of the season and a summer specific properties of the season and a properties of the season and a Mrs. Jorgenses said. "We try to keep our audiences and our ac-

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The Players draws its audience from all over the Detroit area.

"About 30 percent of our audience comes from south of Eight Mile Road," said Jorgensen, the ticket chairman, "And a third come from the Farmington-Bloomfield area. We get the rest from places like Southfield, the Walled Lake area, Millord and Brighton.
"The gasoline shortage has had no effect on our attendance," he continued, and nobody seems to be worried about it, especially our members. Some of them drive in a long way two or three times a week for rehearsals. We sell out almost every performance."

times a week for rehearsals. We self out almost every performance." Performances are held at 32332 W. 12 Mile Road, Farmington, between Farmington and Orchard Lake Roads. For more information call the Players at 477-1066.

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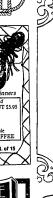
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