

I hear America's special kids singing

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

50 stars on the flag Monday morning when the retarded students at the Farmington Training Center put on a dress rehearsal for their annual theatrical extravaganza — this one a patriotic production.

The play takes place 7-9 p.m. tonight (Thursday) at the center, located at 33000 Thomas, Farmington. While the play, "How the Flag Got 50 Stars" is the main event, there also will be an ice cream social, an old-fashioned cakewalk, a raffle, a guess-the-marbles-in-the-fishbowl contest and T-shirts for sale.

The event, which is open to all, is designed to raise funds for a June 2 trip to Bob-Lo Island amusement park. If enough money is raised, the students will go for free. If less is collected, students will go the park at a reduced rate.

On Monday morning the performers put on their show for friends, family and fellow students. Many students in the audience cheered on their favorite performers. A personal favorite is the inimitable Joe Feathers, who again hammed up every scene he was in — such as stroking his phony beard and doing a vaudeville shuffle after his name was announced. Anna Romanow got a rousing cheer in a minor role as the state of Alaska. Here's how our reviewer viewed the performances:

STELLAR PERFORMANCES were

turned in by Terri Fine, who played Betsy Ross and sang a beautiful rendition of "My Darling Clementine" that had the audience singing and signing along with her in sign language.

Todd Devitt played George Washington about as close to perfect as a dollar bill. His Washington smiled a lot, showing teeth in much better shape than Washington's.

But the real show-stopper was a 19-kazoo choir performance of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again." Hurrah. Hurrah.

The tune was never hummed with more sincerity. A couple of parents in the audience were observed dabbing their eyes.

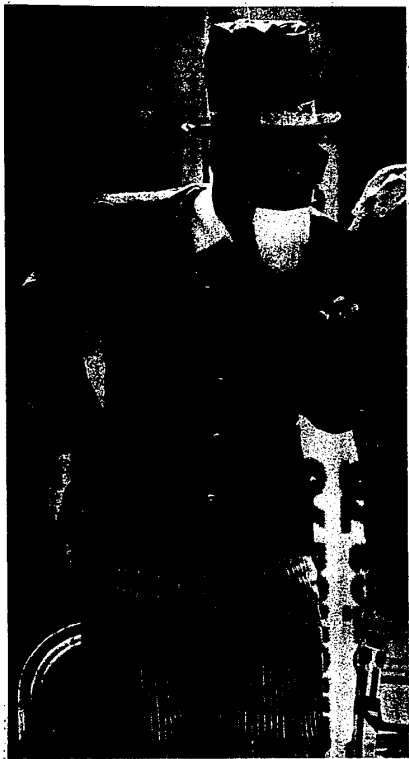
The costumes, designed by Fran Aaron, teacher of the retarded and director of the play, corresponded to the times and region the students represented.

One of the parents called Aaron "the real star of the production," but she shrugged off the praise with an it-was-nothing wave of the hand.

It was something.

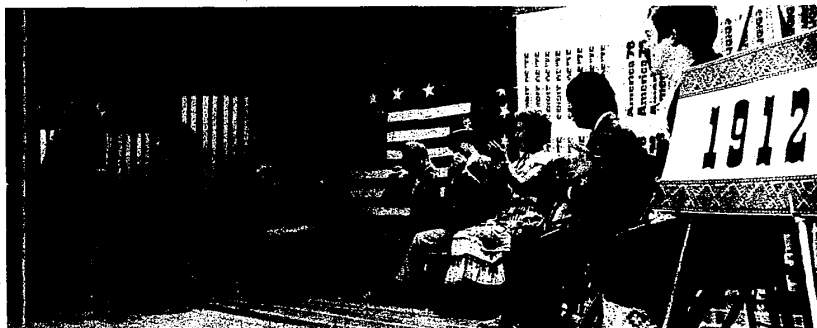


George Washington is a necessary character in any play about America, especially one about the flag. Todd Devitt played the role with dignity befitting the father of our country.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Uncle Sam, played to the hilt by Joe Feathers, a perennial crowd-pleaser, gives his familiar "I Want You!" pose.



The Mexican Hat Dance was the tune that accompanied a dance by Allan Lowther and Erik Kverland honoring the entry of New Mexico and Arizona into the union.

INSIDE ANGLES

SOME YOUNG LEADERS have been noted at Alma College. Two persons from the Farmington area have received senior leadership awards. They are: Jan Beynon, who was honored for her campus contributions of being a resident assistant and then a resident advisor in Alma's residence hall. A member of Alpha Theta Sorority, she served the sorority as secretary, parliamentarian and Panhellenic Council representative. A 1978 Cass Tech graduate, she is the daughter of the Rev. and Mrs. Charles Beynon of Farmington. She received a bachelor of arts degree in business administration last month. The other honoree was Kristine Paul, who was nominated by Gamma Delta Alpha, women's honorary, which she served as president in her senior year. Her campus involvement included being president of Lambda Iota Tau, international literature honorary, chairwoman of the Pierian Spring Society steering committee and a tutor in English. She was a member of the Women's Awareness Organization and the Michigan Scholars and was a dorm council representative. A 1978 graduate of Farmington High School, she is the daughter of Stephen and Dianne Paul of Farmington. She received a bachelor of arts degree in English in April.

FERRIS STUDENT John Andersen came away with some honors himself as he was given the Ferris Associated Government Man of the Year Award. Andersen, a junior in the advertising program, was selected for the award on the basis of community service, collegiate leadership and scholastic ability. He was editor of the campus newspaper, the Ferris Torch, and active in the advertising club and Society for Collegiate Journalists.

CANDIDATES NIGHT is upcoming for the five persons seeking seats on the Farmington Board of Education. The meeting will be June 3 at 7:30 p.m. at Dunckel Middle School 32800 12 Mile. Candidates for this year's election are incumbents Janice Rolnick and Richard Inch. Challengers are Richard Corey, Helen Ditziazy and Jean Moran.

POLITICAL RUMBLINGS — Farmington City Councilman Ralph Yoder and Farmington Hills resident Donna Sklar have declared their allegiances for this year's upcoming gubernatorial sweepstakes. Yoder will head the Farmington Brickley for Governor committee while Sklar will chair the Farmington Hills equivalent.

TRUCK TALK — Richard Gallant of Farmington Hills was among the graduates of the Truck Driver Training Program at Lansing Community College. The four-week course included an extensive road trip which was in excess of 1,000 miles in addition to 40 hours of classroom instruction. He received his certificate at ceremonies at the Fort Custer facility near Battle Creek.

CONGRATULATIONS to the Quakerstown Quoters who recently went that extra mile and contributed a \$500 check to the Farmington Historical Museum.

SEEKING SOME ADVENTURE in a far-off land? Try a trip over to the Farmington Community Library on May 18 at 11 a.m. The movie "Odyssey in Asia" will be shown. The 25-minute film describes the adventures of two young men traveling from Turkey to Japan. Their journey takes them along the Mediterranean shores across Syria, Iran, Afghanistan and India to the Himalayas and finally to Bangkok, Hong Kong and Mt. Fuji.

FOR A LITTLE HISTORY closer to home, try the Farmington historic walk and lunch on May 15, sponsored by the Farmington Community Center. Participants will meet at the Community Center at 10 a.m., where they will car pool to the historic area for a guided walking tour highlighting 18 homes listed in the National Registry of Historic Places. One of these old homes will be open for viewing. Lunch follows at the Botsford Inn. Cost is \$15 per person. Call 477-8404 for further information.

FEELING OLDER. Well, join the crowd. Recent statistics show that one in every seven persons in Michigan is 60 years old or older. In 1970, the ratio was 1 in 8 and by 1990, the ratio is expected to drop to 1 in 6. A study by the Office of Services to the Aging shows that the population of 60-year-olds and older has grown five times greater than that of the total population — 20.2 percent as compared to 4.3 percent. Overall, persons aged 60 and old in 1980 made up 14 percent of the state's population. In Keweenaw county, 36 percent of the population was 60 or older. The youngest county in the state was Washtenaw, with 9 percent of its population 60 years or older.

CORRECTIONS — The story headlined "Burglars go dips below 40" in the May 6 edition should have said the station lost 10 cents a gallon pumped during the happy hour but hopes to make up for it by word-of-mouth advertising and by attracting customers to the station repair work. In the story headlined "Burglaries top the list in city crime" the quote from the annual report should have read "The assailant in the coin shop robbery was apprehended and subsequently convicted, receiving a prison term in excess of 20 years, but the property was not recovered."

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