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Historic schoolhouse breathes life into the past

By Janice Brunson
staff writer

BUBBLING WITH delight and keyed with excitement, 38 kindergarten students from Wooddale Elementary School in Farmington Hills stepped into yesteryear and attended school for a day in the historic Miller School at Greenfield Village.

Decked out in logs reminiscent of those worn by small fry a century ago, the 5- and 6-year-olds quickly settled into the business of readin', writin' and 'rithmetic in a one-room schoolhouse heated by a wood-burning stove (now replaced by a modern furnace) and brightened with kerosene lamps (now electrified).

"It's an opportunity to see what we have and what we don't have, compared to then," said teacher Jerry Pugh, a 23-year teaching veteran who was taken aback when one youngster asked if they had traveled far enough back into time to when Pugh was a child.

Miller School is a faithful replica of the original schoolhouse in East Detroit where Henry Ford once attended school during the latter half of the 19th century.

WITH THE front stoop swept, drinking water pumped into a pail and wood stacked at the foot of the stove, lessons got under way March 31 with the help of teaching assistant Betty Cale and five mother helpers, including Maria Feldman.

Feldman's daughter, Katie, sat next to Katie Weber in a two-seat, hand-hewn wooden desk.

Nearby, Carrie Herrgott, wearing a matching dress, apron and bonnet, sewed especially for the day, and Miriam Lieberman, wearing a lacy number first worn in an uncle's wedding, carefully printed numbers on their slates.

"Join this is what Anthony Domino said he liked best, pointing to his slate, Ronald Chika liked 'doing



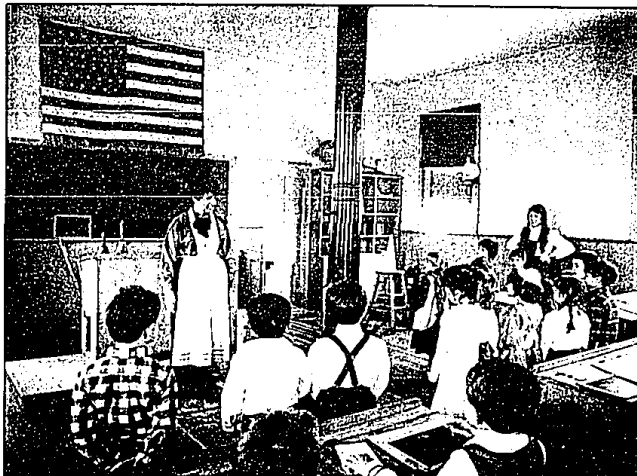
Brian Krieger, dressed in period clothes, listens as his teacher, Jerry Pugh, explains what school was like in the days of one-room schoolhouses.

stuff" best. Ryan Marsee ignored the question, spelling his last name instead and explaining, "It's like a window."

"It work good here," said Tamara Quintieri, decked out in her grandmother's red and white checked apron that dragged the ground.

In keeping with the spirit of the day, Michael Pesmark was punished, made to wear a dunce's cap and sit on a tall stool, much to the delight of others who giggled at the idea.

McGuffey's Eclectic Readers, 19th century teaching materials supplied by Dearborn-based Greenfield Village, were handed out to students who had been placed into three reading groups representing different grade levels, lending an air of authenticity to the one-room school experience.



photos by RANDY BORST/staff photographer

This is what the interior of Miller School looks like. Farmington teacher Jerry Pugh is standing at the head of her class.

"The big thrill was to be placed in the second grade group," Pugh said.

AT 'OON, students unpacked lunches like those carried by children long ago, jelly or meat sandwiches and fruit packed in baskets and napkins.

Charles Nichol, wearing knickers and a cap, carried his great, great-grandfather's tin lunch box, which even has a compartment for coals to

warm food during frosty winter days.

Michael Check passed out old-fashioned sugar cookies from an antique tin, prepared earlier that morning by his mother.

Evan Garelik presented Pugh a large, shiny apple, prompting yellow and red varities from half a dozen others. Pugh immediately launched into an impromptu lesson on numbers and colors.

Period games like Ring Around the Rosy and London Bridges were played during recess. Students were called back into the classroom by the ringing of a large noisy handbell.

Lessons for the day concluded with a spelling bee. Each child was rewarded with a butterscotch candy decorated in yellow and black paper resembling a bee.

After a tour of Cohen's Millinery Shop and Wright's Cycle Shop in



Kelly McKeon and Michael Check (from left) bring in firewood for the wood-burning stove.

Greenfield Village, the group climbed aboard school buses for the ride back to Farmington Hills. Each student received a certificate of attendance at Miller School.

TO PREPARE the young students for their journey into the past, Pugh encouraged them to share personal heritage through family antiques, old pictures and treasures from the past.

Not all, it was discovered, share an American pioneer heritage. Seven of Pugh's students are bi- and tri-lingual and hail from Iraq, Japan and other parts of the world.

Jimmy Lala, for example, whose mother, Zenobia, accompanied the students to Miller School, comes from east India.

The one-room schoolhouse is available for rent by any school group. Cost is \$3.75 each for students and \$7.50 each for adults.

inkwell

Inkwell provides news and information about Farmington-area primary and secondary students. The column appears monthly throughout the year as part of the Observer's "School Page." Send news items to: The School Page, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024. Include a telephone number where a contact person can be reached during the day.

WINNING WRITER
Dunckel Middle School student Ruth Ann Rott earned second place in the Michigan Future Problem Solving Scenario Writing Program.

The win was a 3-year dream for the Farmington Hills eighth grader.

She competed in Division II, covering grades six through nine, with hundreds of other students. The scenario takes the form of a short story, and is a prediction of the future written as though the future is the present.

Ruth Ann Rott
Dunckel
student

is the present.
Rott will receive her award plaque at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Her scenario, with first- and third-place finalists, will be the Michigan entries in the National Scenario Writing Contest.

MERCY A WINNER
Farmington Hills Mercy and Birmingham Marian senior girls were the two Oakland County schools earning honors in raising student awareness of the dangers of drugs during the "Big League Challenge: Crackdown on Drugs" program.

The challenge was sponsored by the Prosecuting Attorneys' Association of Michigan and was supported by Detroit's professional sports teams. Locally, students at both Mercy and Harrison high schools participated.

More than 120 schools from Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and Genesee counties participated in the program that challenged schools to initiate drug awareness programs.

HIGH ACHIEVER
The writing requirement for entry to Kalamazoo College was waived for Farmington Hills Harrison High School student Julie Recker.

In considering attending the private college in Western Michigan, Recker participated in an essay writing competition.

"Because the level of competition was very high, this represents a significant achievement," said Kalamazoo English professor Richard Stavig in a letter to Harrison English teacher Kathy Nyberg.

BUDDING POET
Laura Westberg, a fifth grader at Forest Elementary, was awarded first place in a poetry contest sponsored by the Poetry Society of Michigan.

Entitled "Clowns," the win brought the Farmington Hills student a \$10 prize.

WOODDALE ACTIVITIES
Students and staff at Wooddale Elementary are gearing up for a month of activities, from hosting visitors to a spring concert.

Tomorrow, students will host grandparents and other special friends who are invited to view the school's science exhibition. A PTO variety show, visit from a bell choir, show by the Dunckel band and choir and an evening "spring sing" are all scheduled for April.

HIGH SCORES
Four Farmington Hills Harrison High students participated in the American Invitational Mathematics Examination last month.

Harrison had the highest individual and team school scores in the school's history.

Seniors Nico Blatt, David King, Wes Wood and sophomore James Cannon all participated.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS
The Farmington Hills Harrison High School Boosters Club held its annual Scholarship Awards Competition in March, awarding eight scholarships to students at the school.

Junior flute player Lisa Donovan won a \$200 scholarship.

Winning \$100 scholarships were: freshmen Melissa Rokoczy and Sara Paul, both pianists; sophomores Jim Cannon on alto saxophone, Shannon McCormick on flute and Dina Zamczyk on violin and juniors Ron Latwinski on euphonium, and Sue Kubat and Dawn Frembes, both on flute.

Senior violinist Jana Bolla will be the featured performer at Harrison's final Symphony Band Concert this spring.

TOPS IN MATH
Farmington Hills resident Steven Tobocman, a student at Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook Kingswood School,

finished in the top four percent of more than 22,000 students competing in the 31st Annual Michigan Mathematics Prize Competition.

Eighteen of his classmates also finished in the top 4 percent.

POET LAUDED
A Farmington gifted coordinator was awarded first place in the 1988 Poet Hunt Competition sponsored by Schoolcraft Community College, Livonia.

Barbara Rebbeck, who works at Power Middle School and Lakeshire Elementary, received \$100 for her poem "Apples."

Her winning entry will appear this fall in The MacCuffin Magazine. She was invited, with other winners, to read her poetry this week at Schoolcraft.

ANIMAL ADOPTION
Longacre Elementary students have completed an "adopt-an-animal" program for the Living Science Foundation of Novi.

Students earned money at home, doing various jobs, to help pay for an animal. The program ran from Feb. 22 through March 18.

JOURNALISM STANDOUT
Farmington Hills Mercy High School student Jennifer Burns was named a national award winner in journalism.

Burns will appear in the U.S. Achievement Academy's yearbook, a national publication.

Students are selected for the honor based on academic performance, interest and aptitude, leadership qualities, responsibility, enthusiasm, motivation to learn and improve, citizenship, cooperative spirit, dependability and teacher recommendation.

She was nominated by her journalism teacher, Robert Moore.

NEW CHIEF
Donald Bemis, 53, superintendent of Ulica Community Schools, was named last week as the new state superintendent. His effective starting date has not been determined.

Bemis becomes the 38th state superintendent, replacing Phillip Runkel, who resigned May 1, 1987, to accept the presidency of Northwestern Michigan College in Traverse City.

Bemis serves on the Oakland University Board of Trustees. He also served in 1987 as state chair of the American Soviet Initiative for Understanding.



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