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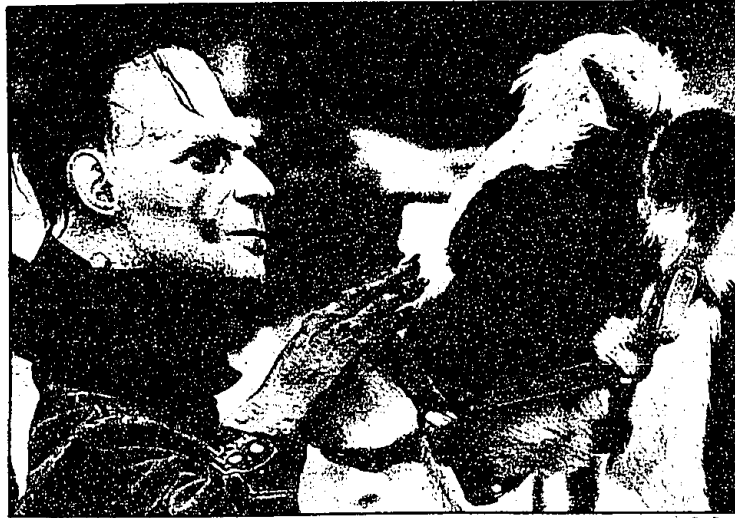
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**SPRINK**



Calming the beast: A Farmington-area youngster, dressed for the occasion, pets the beast in the pen during last year's Halloween Fest in Farmington.

**Halloween's a hoot in Farmington**

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
Staff Writer

Downtown Farmington will put on its mask and roll out the pumpkin-colored carpet to trick-or-treaters this Saturday.

The city is hosting its second-annual Halloween Fest. Last year's event drew an estimated 1,000 people downtown despite rain and bone-chilling cold.

The only lingering organizers want visitors to feel this year is in their spines from a frightfully delightful day out.

Costume contests are planned for parents, progeny and pooches. So is live music under the main tent.

Most of all, the festival howls a universal language understood by ghouls and goblins. Free.

Pony rides and petting zoo are at no cost as is a moonwalk. The Civic Theatre will also show free movies.

The event, like the Founders Festival and Mini-Prix, is expect-

ed to bring people from all around metro Detroit to Farmington's downtown.

Organizers have tried to whip up some pre-Halloween frenzy. Several scarecrows adorn the Masonic Temple Plaza, the result of a contest a few weeks ago.

Merchandise have been asked to get involved.

"I tried to impress upon them we have over 1,000 kids trick-or-treating and as many adults," said Farmington Downtown Development Authority Director Judy Downey.

"If they decorate their stores — and a few more have this year — it helps maintain the Halloween spirit."

The festival drew some pre-October publicity, perhaps not what organizers had hoped for.

The city received a few complaints about psychics at last year's event and contemplated not having clairvoyants back.

The flap was resolved; Psychics will offer readings in a separate tent.

Along with rubbing a crystal ball, this year's Halloween Fest has a few wagging their tails.

A pet costume contest has been added. The competition for dogs, cats and other family pets sponsored by PVH Hospital is 4 p.m. Saturday.

"I'm not looking to see too many goldfish," said John Virley, who is helping organize the event.

A costume contest sponsored by Kiddie Karousel will take place for kids up to age 12 at 2 p.m. Adults aren't left out.

Their costume contest is 8 p.m. under the main tent. Contestants must register by 7:30 p.m.

Grand prize is \$300 and a gift certificate for flowers from Heeny Sunquist and lunch at Cowley's.

Second prize includes \$300 and a gift certificate from the Gold

Loft and third-prize winner receives \$100.

As last year, free movies will be shown at the Civic Theatre. "Adams Family" showtimes are 2 and 4 p.m. Times for the original "Dracula" are 2, 3:30, 5 and 11:30 p.m.

Live music will be supplied by J.C. and the Groove 6-10:30 p.m. under the main tent. Nell Woodward, who plays the fiddle, dulcimer and tin whistle, performs at noon.

Sweet Little Show Cloggers, Young Country Dancers and Hometown Cloggers will also perform.

Trick-or-treating of downtown shops kicks off the event at 10 a.m. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Will this change Farmington to be known as Halloween Town USA?

"This thing takes a few years to catch on," Virley said. "After a few years, it snowballs."

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