



**Bearly much fun:** Above, Megan McRae takes a breather during Thursday's Teddy Bear Parade in Shiawassee Park, by sitting in the lap of her really big bear. Megan's dad, Farmington Hills councilman Chris McRae, bought it for her mother Maureen as a Sweetest Day gift. Pictured right, Spencer Amann wears Bandit while waiting for the teddy bear parade.

STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL BREZNER

# Teddy Bear parade draws much-loved toys, kids together

BY SUE BUCK  
STAFF WRITER  
sbuck@oe.homecomm.net

Everybody loves a parade, especially kids and teddy bears. The annual Teddy Bear Parade, held Thursday in Shiawassee Park, drew many ages and sizes of bears — from one received at a baby shower and now hugged by the child for whom the shower was given, to a six-foot bear which was a Sweetest Day gift.

Allison Sarokin, 8, of Novi knew what she liked about Bearoonie almost from the day she knew the cuddle value of teddy bears.

"You love him," she said.

Allison earned the Most Loved Bear award following the parade, which was one of many events at the Farmington Founders Festival.

Andrea, Allison's mother, said she received Bearoonie when she was expecting Allison.

The curly bear is now worn pretty smooth. When it became apparent the Sarokin Family needed another bear for Allison's younger brother, Andrew, Andrea bought one exactly the same.

"It cuddles with me in bed," Andrew said.

"This is what it looked like when it started," Andrea said, showing off Andrew's newer bear. "We should probably have taken a before-and-after picture."

Baby Bear was a 1995 Sweetest Day gift from Christopher McRae to his wife, Maureen. Christopher McRae is a Farmington Hills councilman. Maureen spotted the six-foot tall bear in a baby store at Grand River and Halsted.

"I'd love that bear," Maureen remarked to her husband. She was surprised to find Baby Bear resting comfortably on the bed when she came home on Sweetest Day.

"The girls love it and cuddle up to it and use it as furniture," Maureen said. "It was in a theater production, too."

The back seat of their van had to be taken out to bring Baby Bear to the park. During the parade, the McRaes used a rope to belt him into a wagon.

Baby Bear netted daughter, Kiera, the Biggest Bear award.

Others who received \$10 gift certificates from the Build-a-Bear Workshop store at Twelve Oaks Mall, which specializes in making customized stuffed bears, were:

■ Best in Show — Timmy Devine, Samantha Alapert and Darian Harper

■ Best Dressed — Sabrina Dettor

■ Most Creative — Lucy Devine

■ Most Like Owner — Kelsey Petty

■ Smallest — Domi Mack-soud

Farmington Hills Mayor Nancy Bates led the parade holding her bear, Teddy, with one hand and city mascot Parkey Panda with her free arm. She announced the winners, who were invited to participate in the Founders Festival Parade Saturday. Farmington Mayor Bill Hartsack was also present with a bear.

Build-A-Bears were a definite favorite at the parade. Pooja Singh of Farmington Hills wheeled hers in a plastic toy grocery cart. "I like her because she's pink," Pooja said.

The bear was built for Pooja's August birthday, her mother said.

Gloria Russell proudly displayed her white bear, which won the fuzziest bear category at a previous teddy bear contest. She said her son, Matt, was too old to enter this year's event but they couldn't resist having more fun.

"We just made him (the bear) a sandwich board," Gloria said.

Barry Brickner, Farmington Hills councilman, brought Ralph, a bear which has been in the family 10-15 years.

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## Steve King and the Dittlies headline 'Stars' concert

Steve King and the Dittlies, one of Michigan's favorite oldies groups, will ignite the crowd as the group performs at the free "Stars in the Park" Concert Series at 8 p.m. Thursday, July 26 in Heritage Park.

Designated the 1998 Michigan Music Awards Band of the Year, this nine-member Detroit-based

group has performed in every conceivable venue.

With a track record that spans the better part of three decades, and playing over 200 dates a year, they have set attendance records at many of their festival appearances.

The band has built a reputation for family oriented fun,

playing the classic rock music that never fails to spark great memories and ignite those dancing shoes.

Bring a blanket or chair and some refreshments for an evening of fun. For more information call 473-1856.

## Ox roast from page A1

and listen to "Too Fun" offer up a danceable version of "Kansas City," the Ox Roast provided an unofficial setting for high school graduates to get together with fellow classmates.

"It's great — It's about time," said their friend and fellow '78 grad Pat Hamilton, of the return of the roast after a five-year hiatus.

"We see familiar faces," explained Marcia West. Craig added, "It's a Farmington tradition. I've already seen 20 people I used to know."

As the sun set, globe lights strung along the inside tent perimeter provided lighting for attendees, many seated at long wood-topped tables.

A row of white tables and chairs was placed just west of the tent perimeter. It provided a respite from the pounding drums, bass and electric guitars. "It's a little nicer out here," said Michelle Emig of Farmington Hills.

"It's nice they brought it back this year," said John Hawkins.

A third friend, Chris Hartsack, added, "They definitely needed something for the younger residents of Farmington."

Hills Mayor Nancy Bates, with husband Charlie. "We're having fun, it's a great crowd," she said.

"They seem to really enjoy having beef sandwiches," said Farmington City Councilwoman JoAnne McShane, volunteering at noon at the food ticket table. "Some people say it feels like old times."

Roasting beef on a spit and keeping the metal trays filled with barbecue beef and beef aujus was one job for Page's Chef Richie Serna. He and restaurant owner Dennis Page communicated with staff inside via black walkie talkies.

"I was up at 5 a.m.," Serna explained. "The night before I trimmed all my beef, and marinated and rubbed it in garlic, rosemary and olive oil for 12 hours."

Serna said people were enthusiastic about the return of the roast. "They love it. Everybody missed it, people have been talking about it all over town."

"I've heard all positive things," Page said, pausing to speak instructions into the walkie talkie. "This is one of my busiest weeks of the year."

Placing pink wrist bands on adults entering the tent at 8 p.m. was volunteer Abe Aon, an

Optimist and Farmington Hills beautification commissioner.

"So far it's more than expected, it's really impressive," he said. "People are familiar with the old style. The Founders Festival is back in town, the old style of dance music is back."

Former Farmington city mayor John Richardson lives in West Bloomfield now, but he was back volunteering at the Ox Roast in the early afternoon. He recalled when the event started in the '60s, and the Ox Roast was a festival centerpiece. "They brought in a steer in a pen, across from Starbucks," he said. The animal was on hand for show, not for supper.

He recalled when town leaders organized the first festivals, to give downtown merchants a chance to clear out summer stock in late July. Richardson also recalled festival organizers bringing in dignitaries from Farmington, N.Y., to be on hand for the festival: "We paid their way and put them up in the Botsford Inn."

"This is a lovely, lovely thing," said volunteer Patsy Kenworthy of Farmington Hills. "It's very family oriented and they've been very careful to keep it that way."

## "It's a New Day at Crittenton!"



Dr. Robert Go  
Vice Chief of Staff, Pulmonologist

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"I am happy to participate with a new board that, for the first time, includes physicians. In an era of extremely large hospitals, I am hopeful this cozy hospital nestled in Rochester will provide a feeling of great security to patients."



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