

Sweet success

Festival draws 100,000-plus

BY SUE BUCK
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Downtown Farmington brought in the masses last weekend as people from throughout the area put the Farmington Area Founders Festival on their pleasure ticket.

The event held its own as it competed with other popular venues like the Ann Arbor Art Fair and Detroit's 300th birthday celebration on the Detroit River. Farmington-area residents — and those who probably secretly wished they were — bought, watched and ate their hearts out.

The festival, which returned to its traditional date and time, was happily received.

"We are extremely pleased," said Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff. "We had more than 100,000 people in three days. I think people were pleased with the quality of the arts and crafts and having the Ox Roast back. We have not seen this type of crowd since the 1970s."

Back by popular demand, the traditional Ox Roast returned to the municipal parking lot behind Page's Restaurant on Farmington Road.

"It was well organized," said Mike Wiggins, deputy director of public safety. "There was nothing out of the ordinary."

Calls for service were up 26 percent when compared with the festival period last year, Wiggins said. "There were a lot of parking and traffic complaints."

These complaints were festival-related and didn't stem from the road construction which

started Wednesday between Eight and Nine Mile Roads. "That was further down," Wiggins said.

Return to tradition

After the 2000 experiment of holding the event in June under the unfamiliar name Farmington Area Family Fest, solid traditions held down the success of this year's festival. The Miss Farmington Pageant heralded the start of the festival Wednesday evening. The parade and pancake breakfast are mainstays.

Lauhoff lauded the large amount of advertising for the festival. "It was mentioned in every newspaper and on Mitch Albom," he said.

Larry Sallen, owner of Clothes Encounters on Grand River was also impressed with the advertising. "Hats off to the organizers," Sallen said. "There were banners everywhere. I even heard it on the radio. We sold a lot of clothes out of here."

Sallen was so busy he never ventured away from his store but asked customers where they were heading to next. Their answer: the Ox Roast, also known as Founders Cafe, and arts and crafts.

Page's Food & Spirits, which served up the Cafe's popular roast beef sandwiches — with or without barbecue sauce — estimated thousands were served over three days. Other eateries reported a steady stream of customers, too.

"For us, it went well," said Chris Burger, manager of Dagwood's Deli in the Downtown Farmington Business Center.

"We sold a lot of drinks. People were thirsty. It helped that the exhibits were facing toward us. It created a walkway toward our store. Last year they faced away from us."

Jeff Pavlik, who owns Farmington Bakery, called this year's festival well orchestrated. "It had a professional look," he said.

The festival committee was timely and responsive in returning phone calls, he said. They took merchants' negative reactions last year to heart and acted upon them to produce a stronger event this year. "Comments were taken seriously," Pavlik said.

Chamber raffle

According to Chamber of Commerce spokesperson Ara Toupouzian, an estimated 900 tickets were sold for this year's raffle, with prizes that included the choice of \$30,000 cash, a Corvette, Harley-Davidson motorcycles or a vacation trip. "We did better than we expected," he said.

Grand Prize winner Glen Rowden of Eastpointe hadn't selected his prize as of Tuesday. Other winners were:

2nd (\$1,000): Jeff Luke, Farmington Hills; 3rd (\$500): T.J. Studnick, Farmington Hills; 4th (\$500) Bob Saks, Farmington Hills; 5th (\$500): Mary Eghigian, Farmington Hills; 6th (\$250): Todd Hemmi and Michelle Spear, both of Farmington Hills; 7th (\$250): George Berling, Farmington Hills; 8th (\$250): the YMCA staff; 10th (\$150): Page's employees; 10th (\$150) Neil Johnson, Farmington.



STAFF PHOTO BY ELIZABETH CARNEGIE

Fast friends: Up past their bed time but still having fun at the fountain are Christopher Chunn of Redford and Raymond Parejo of Farmington Hills. Both boys will turn 3 years old on Aug. 5 and had never met until the chance meeting at the fountain during the Founders Festival.



STAFF PHOTO BY ELIZABETH CARNEGIE

Lucky call: Trudie Daniels (WRIF) and Ara Toupouzian of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce call the grand prize raffle winner Glen Rowden of Eastpointe on the phone after his entry was chosen.



They got you, babe: The band Funtown parodied Sonny and Cher during the Ox Roast Saturday.

STAFF PHOTO BY ELIZABETH CARNEGIE

Golden's Magical History Tour gives guests a taste of legends, landmarks

BY KEVIN BROWN
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Roll up for the Magical History Tour - it's coming to take you away.

Good afternoon. It's exactly 1 p.m. Friday at the Farmington Area Founders Festival, off of Grand River and Grove downtown. Your bus driver is Deborah Jones, wearing a crocheted, light blue hat.

Your tour guide is Carol Huska, a Farmington Historical Society volunteer and former city beautification commissioner.

Just before we embark, historical society President Brian Golden adjusts a card that holds the "Magical History Tour" banner to the side of the yellow mini-school bus.

The shiny black banner, with trippy letters of red, blue, green, yellow and purple, is set off by the vivid yellow of the school bus.

Huska, in a festive flowery dress, tests the gray hand-held microphone, attached to the bus radio by a curly cord. "Is that

loud enough?" she asks, adjusting the volume knob. "That's a little better," she said.

"Hello sweetie," she says, to Niko and Jessica DelCotto, the youngest members of the tour. With the young children in their grandmother Yolanda DelCotto, of Farmington Hills.

The bus heads west along Grand River. "Coming up is the Heeny Sundquist Funeral Home, built in 1850," Huska said. "It's one of the oldest continuing business establishments in Oakland County."

She reads from a text prepared by Golden, but occasionally edits or embellishes.

As we head further north now on Farmington Road, Huska points out the tan home of Dr. Ezekiel Webb. Built in 1825, it served as Farmington's first post office. "That means in the 1820s you could have a stamp and a disease licked at the same time," she said.

Tour goes soon get a look at the Philbrick Tavern, built in 1827 at 11 Mile and Power Roads. The tavern was rumored to be a stop on the Underground

Railroad, as the Quakers who settled Farmington were known for being against slavery.

The tour continues to 14 Mile and Farmington Roads, where the Village of North Farmington flourished from 1850-1950. At 14 Mile and Halsted Roads is the Minnow Pond, where legend has it that a young brave trailing a deer drowned in quicksand - as did his sweetheart, who followed the trail of her missing brave.

The North Farmington Cemetery holds a veteran from every U.S. war. The oldest veteran buried there is Levi Green, who fought in the Revolutionary War.

The tour bus emptied at the Governor Warner mansion, where the group continued with their look at Farmington's past. Herb Shaw of Farmington said his favorite stop was "the (Philbrick) tavern on 11 Mile."

"I want to come back," said Yolanda DelCotto. "I didn't realize there was so much history in my city."

MILITARY NEWS

Army Pvt. William S. Hines has graduated from basic infantry training at Fort Benning, Columbus, Ga. The soldier received training

in drill and ceremonies, weapons, map reading, tactics, military courtesy, military justice, physical fitness, first aid and Army history and traditions.

He is the son of Beverly Hines of Farmington Hills. Hines is a 1997 graduate of Harrison High School.

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