



Jeff Fischer, 2, of Livonia, enjoys a boat ride at the Founders Festival.



Joe Foster of Charlotte relaxes in the Founders Festival heat while selling his furniture. He began making furniture after retiring 10 years ago.

photo by THOMAS ARNETT/staff photographer

Sizzlin' festival

Nighttime crowds brought event to life

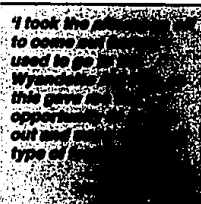
Extreme heat could not stop crowds from flocking to downtown Farmington for the 24th celebration of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Founders Festival last week.

"I think the festival went really well," said Jody Soronen, festival administrator and executive director of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce. "The heat kept the crowds down during the day, but at nighttime it picked up."

The festival parade, which ran from the Grand River Drive-in to Farmington Road, was a success, according to Soronen. In line with the festival's ethnic theme, the parade stressed the cultural and racial diversity of the Farmington/Farmington Hills area. Flags representing several nations were raised, a Japanese dancing team performed a traditional dance and a Chinese dragon moved through the streets.

"It was a great parade," said Soronen. She said the chamber of commerce was concerned with groups, such as the cheerleaders and drill teams, who had to perform under the sun. Soronen said there were no problems, however.

One of the highlights of the parade, Soronen said, was the Detroit Commandery No. 1 Drill Team, a unit of men in their early 50s and older. A last-minute entry, the team won the first-place drill team award. "It wasn't easy marching in 100-degree weather," said Soronen said.



"They looked terrific in the parade."

The jazz concert at Oakland Community College, another main event and festival finale, received the opposite treatment from Mother Nature. Rain poured down and lighting was seen in the middle of Flight One's musical act. The third of four scheduled performers, Flight One, an Air Force band, was forced to stop due to the weather.

According to Soronen, the rainout, although disappointing, did not tarnish the quality of the overall festival, nor its appeal to the people attending.

"I think people come for a number of different reasons. We have people come downtown in 100-degree weather and in the rain," she said. "The festival is a longtime tradition."

Tradition seems to be one reason why the Founders Festival is so successful each year. Yvonne Singer, a resident of Farmington for 18 years, had attended the festival both Thursday night and Friday afternoon. "I enjoy it immensely," she said. "That is why I come back more than once."

Donna Aguirre, a Southfield resident, heard the news of the festival from a friend in Livonia. "I took the afternoon off to come out here," she said. "I used to go to the Wyandotte Art Fair, so this gave me the opportunity to come out and see a different type of festival. It's really nice."

Soronen said that crafters sponsored by the chamber of commerce say they did well financially. A large tear in the craft tent required some crafters to move out of their allocated spots and toward the center of the tent, but it was quickly repaired and everything was back to normal.

Bobbie Laughlin, working for the Order of the Eastern Star, a fraternal organization affiliated with the Masonic Temple, said of the festival, "I think it brings people to the downtown area. I know people look forward to this."

"If they know you are here, you will do well," said Ron Dunkel, a merchant specializing in baseball cards. "I know I'll buy stuff in this area."

Even John Gornall and Billy Moody, a couple of youngsters selling

lemonade in front of Sav-A-Center Food Market, hoped to take advantage of the citywide festivities and make some extra summer spending money.

Soronen said that the chamber of commerce has already received orders for space from crafters and food vendors for next year's festival. There are also verbal commitments from parade participants.

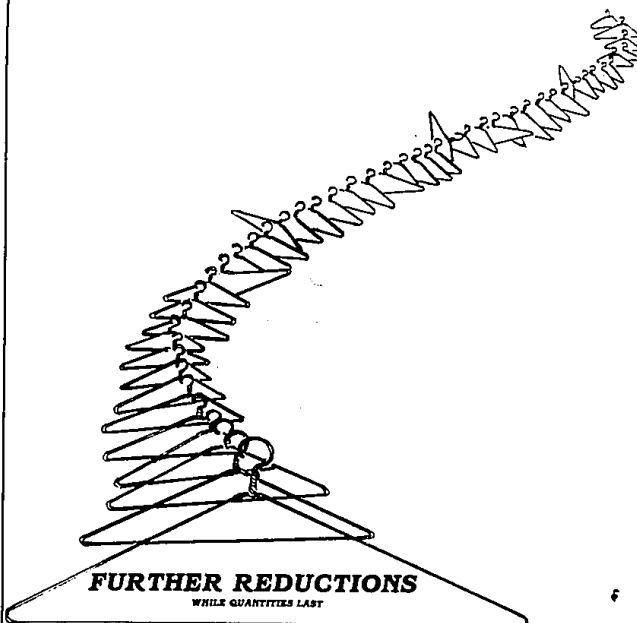
But that's next year. This year is a success in Soronen's book. "We are very happy with our festival this year," she said.



Julia McComb, 7, of Clark Lake, near Jackson, takes a break from the Founders Festival heat with a snow cone.

CLEARANCE

Designer Dresses Designer Sportswear Suits Sportswear Women's Dresses
Maternity Accessories Menswear Childrenswear Miss J and Mr. J
Home Furnishings Accessories for the Home



Still going on! Don't miss important savings during our timely clearance of cool summer apparel and accessories to wear now.

Jacobson's

We welcome Jacobson's Charge or the American Express® Card.
Shop until 6 p.m. on Thursday and Friday. Until 6 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday.

Teen faces trial in death of Hills woman in crash

By Alice Collins
staff writer

The court Monday ordered 17-year-old Joseph Vincent Walker IV of Birmingham to stand trial on two counts of involuntary manslaughter in the traffic deaths of two people Feb. 21 in Bloomfield Township.

Forty-eighth District Judge Edward Sosnick in issuing his ruling at the conclusion of a preliminary exam described the case as "a tragedy within a tragedy."

Sosnick said he was satisfied that there is enough evidence against the defendant to justify sending it on to circuit court for a jury trial. "I cannot help but observe this is a terrible tragedy," said Sosnick. "... obviously two persons are not here today because they were killed." He also pointed out the tragedy to "a young man starting out."

"All of us wish we did not have to be here ... but we have to deal with it and go on and make as much sense of it as we can," continued Sosnick.

THE VICTIMS, driver Samuel Shreeman of Detroit with his passenger, Judith Ann Ferrier of Farmington Hills, had just pulled out onto Lahar from the Brother Rice High School parking lot when struck by the Walker car shortly after midnight. Shreeman and Ferrier had just left an Alcoholic Anonymous dance.

A blood test taken after the accident showed Walker had been driving drunk. Michigan law sets the minimum blood alcohol level for drunk driving at .10 percent. Walker's level tested at .13 percent.

Also, a police accident reconstruction expert testified during the hearing that Walker was driving about 15 mph over the 40 mph posted speed limit.

Defense attorney Fred Lauck lost a motion to throw out Walker's blood test arguing that the search warrant used to obtain the test was invalid.

Also, the defense pointed to testimony by witnesses indicating that the headlights of the Shreeman vehicle weren't on immediately following the accident. Walker (Shreeman) car pulled out of a black hole into

Forty-eighth District Judge Edward Sosnick in issuing his ruling at the conclusion of a preliminary exam described the case as 'a tragedy within a tragedy.'

pitch darkness ... right into the path of Joe Walker," maintained Lauck in his closing argument. Walker couldn't have seen the dangerous situation ahead of him, he said.

"Even if there is some evidence of speeding ... even if there is some evidence of intoxication," there no indication that was the cause of the accident, argued Lauck.

SOSNICK painstakingly went over his thought processes and cited past court cases in announcing his ruling. Walker and his family members in the courtroom appeared nervous as they waited for the judge to reveal his actual decision.

Family members of the victims who had attended all earlier sessions of the exam weren't in court Monday. Ferrier, 49, and Shreeman, 40, were both teachers in Detroit Public Schools and members of the AA group, according to Ferrier's son, Charles Morris.

His mother had been sober six months, while Shreeman had been sober three years, according to Morris. Neither Ferrier nor Shreeman was wearing a seat-belt. She was dead at the scene; he died six days later in William Beaumont Hospital.

Sosnick said Walker, a recent graduate of Brother Rice High School, could remain free under a \$5,000 personal bond awaiting trial in circuit court.

Conviction of involuntary manslaughter carries a maximum penalty of 10-15 years in prison.