

SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer

Stacey Schroeder (left), 3, of Farmington Hills, rides in the Downtown Farmington Center parking lot. Crystal Martin, 6, of Farmington, at the kiddie one.



DOUGLAS E. SUSALLA/staff photographer

Jamie Moonshied (left), 12, of Farmington Hills, grabs another handful of cherry pie during the Founders Festival. Offering advice are Dave Perry, 9, and Dennis Firment, 12, also of Farmington Hills.

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# Founders Festival draws especially good reviews

**F**FOUNDERS FESTIVAL organizers say this year's festivities could be considered the most successful ever for the annual community event.

Pleasant weather conditions, a full activities schedule and a fun-loving crowd were key elements that contributed to the appeal of the festival, which encompasses activities in both Farmington and Farmington Hills.

"This was the festival's 25th year. I think this year's festival was a great success," said Jody Soronen, festival administrator and executive director of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce.

"We couldn't have asked for better weather or a better turnout."

The festival, held July 8-16, attracted many local residents as well as visitors from surrounding areas.

Christy Forhan, a visiting resident of West Bloomfield Township, was pleasantly surprised to discover the activities in Farmington. "I'm here because I'm having my car fixed at the Radiator Hospital — I can't think of a more enjoyable way to spend my time," she said.

TWO NEW events added to this

year's schedule included a Civil War encampment, which kicked off the festival July 8-9, and a bed race to benefit the work of the Muscular Dystrophy Association, held just before Saturday's parade. Both events pleased organizers immensely and are already re-scheduled for next year.

"I think everyone got lost in action," said Soronen of the Civil War event. "The skirmishes, infantry drills, campfire demonstrations and mail call brought a realistic sense of what the war was really like."

MDA officials were also pleased with the newly introduced bed race activity.

"The turnout was phenomenal," said Kim Sidwell, MDA program director. "We couldn't have hoped for better weather conditions or a more enthusiastic crowd."

WAYNE AND Jody Nowels, two longtime Farmington Hills residents who have attended festivals for years, said the bed race added something special to the festival.

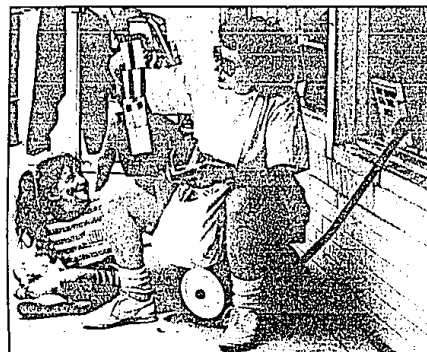
Tom Edmondson, a downtown Farmington resident, came to the race with two sons, 4-year-old Andrew and 1-year-old Derek.

"I've been attending the festival parade for the past five years, and I think the bed race is a great addition," he said. "It's nice to have something to do while waiting for the parade."



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Elaine Westball, a pie-baking contest committee member, cuts pie while spectators wait for the results. The First United Methodist Church of Farmington sponsors the annual contest.



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Gina Acciaoli (left), 6, of Farmington Hills, watches her mom, Amy, test a Jacob's ladder amid the arts and crafts displays in downtown Farmington.



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Bradley Mock (right), 3, of Farmington, helps Kim Johnston, 12, of Farmington Hills, during a letter-fund-raiser, sponsored by Students Against Driving Drunk near the First United Methodist Church of Farmington.

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