

Scouts bestow highest honor on Farmington Hills resident

Dr. John Hovanesian of Farmington Hills was awarded the Silver Beaver Award recently at the Annual Meeting of the Clinton Valley Council, Boy Scouts of America.

The Silver Beaver Award is the highest award a volunteer can receive from the local Boy Scout Council. It takes years of service to youth in many areas to reach this level of recognition.

Hovanesian held many different roles from Cub Scout in the late seventies to council executive board member in 1994.

He earned his Arrow of Light with Pack 45 in the Ottawa District in 1978 and the rank of Eagle Scout with four palms in Troop 179 in 1982.

From 1982 to 1992, Hovanesian was an assistant scoutmaster in Troop 179. In 1990 he became Troop 179's Explorer Post Chairman and since 1992 he has been that unit's committee chairman.

Other Ottawa District assignments and activities have included district activities committee; district health and safety committee; organizer of a varsity scouting basketball league; unit publicity chairman; district pinewood derby staff; Cub Scout day camp staff; Red Cross CPR instructor; member of the Scouting for Food Committee; and assistant district commissioner/medical.

Phony dynamite is surprise during drill

By MARIE CHESTNEY
STAFF WRITER

Five local fire departments, including Farmington Hills, raced to Livonia to find survivors after an aircraft "crashed" into the City Hall and the building was evacuated.

It was only a disaster drill — but one which took an unexpected turn June 6. A bundle of sticks that looked like dynamite put some realism in to the aircraft crash.

As the firefighters went floor to floor, one came across an object that was not written into the script: apparent sticks of dynamite bundled together and stuck in one of the offices.

"When they looked at it they saw a timing device," said Alden Sawyer, Livonia's director of emergency preparedness. "They didn't know what it was, so they reported it, and we accepted it as a real threat. This was not part of the scenario, and the way it was described, it appeared to be something authentic."

Halting rescue operations, firefighters from Redford Township, Farmington Hills, Westland, Canton and Metropolitan Airport all evacuated Livonia City Hall to ensure their own safety. A call even went out to the Michigan State Police bomb squad.

"The threat turned out to be a harmless replica of a bundle of dynamite sticks."

"But we had to treat it as real," Sawyer said. "We didn't know if it was a plant, that someone put it there to be part of the exercise."

The unexpected twist slowed down rescue operations for about 15 minutes.

When the cargo airplane "crashed" at 10 a.m., city hall workers left their posts, evacuating the building. The drill was over by 11:30 a.m.

The firefighters' goal was twofold: test the communication systems police and firefighters use during emergencies, and practice search and rescue procedures in a building that has undergone some type of disaster.

Keeping with the script, firefighters dragged their hose lines all the way up to the top floors at city hall, perhaps even into the mayor's office.

In the script, the fifth floor collapsed on to the fourth.

Firefighters practiced fighting a major fire, searching a devastated building, setting up an area to treat the injured, and deciding who was injured badly enough to be immediately taken to St. Mary Hospital.

A planned twist to the drama was when the downed pilot who survived the crash told rescue workers that radioactive material was in the plane's cargo hatch. This brought into action members of hazardous materials teams.

"There'll always be bugaboos, but all in all everybody and everything performed well and we learned a number of things from the exercise," Sawyer said.

At council level, Hovanesian's activities include golf outing sales volunteer; merit badge counselor; health officer for Lost Lake Family Camping weekends; member of the Drug Abuse Prevention Committee; and member of the great committee.

He completed the Wood Badge Course in 1992 and earned certification shortly thereafter. In 1995, Hovanesian served on staff for a Council Cub Scout Wood Badge course. His honors include the O.D. Boatwick, Scouter's Train-

ing and other awards.

A member of the Order of the Arrow, he has earned Vigil Honor, the highest recognition that this national, youth-run scouting fraternity can bestow. Among his many contributions to the success of the Order of the Arrow Chapter are a Chippewa Lodge Handbook for Elongomats in 1986, and the "The Oak and the Pine," a training book which is being distributed nationally.

He has been on the medical staff at the last two National

Jamborees. Recently, Hovanesian completed a "Scouter's Guide to Medical Conditions of Childhood," which is now being reviewed by the Boy Scouts of America and is expected to be released nationally in the near future.

In addition to all his other activities, he has found time for service to youth outside of scouting as well. Since 1991 he has been active in the Detroit Armenian Church youth organization and currently is vice president of that

organization.

Since 1985 he has been an advisor to the Armenian Student Cultural Association at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. In 1988 he organized an Adolescent AIDS Education Project for the American Medical Student Association.

A 1985 graduate of Farmington High School, Hovanesian graduated summa cum laude from the University of Michigan in 1992 and from the University of Michigan Medical School in 1992. He

served his transitional internship at William Beaumont Hospital in 1992 and 1993 and currently is a resident physician at Henry Ford Hospital.

Commenting on his view of scouting, Hovanesian said: "Scouting offers young people a trial run at some of life's toughest challenges — learning independence, establishing a self-image, planning a future — in an atmosphere of high moral standards with the Scout Oath and Law as their guide."

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