

Wooddale landing

Astronaut orbits schools' Science Fair

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

When the astronaut landed at Wooddale Elementary, children launched their questions. Retired Marine Corps Col. Jack Loumsa spent Friday at the Farmington Hills elementary school, which was conducting its annual science fair. Portions of Wooddale building were renamed such things as "Incubation Pod"

while children's space-related projects decorated the hallway.

"I went through the universe on the way down to the library today," said Loumsa, who flew on two space missions including a 59-day Skylab mission in 1973.

Loumsa accompanied by his wife Gratia, shared his experiences in orbit dressed in the same blue spacesuit from the Skylab II mission.

He entertained kids with anecdotes of how he dealt with weightlessness in space, sleeping while he floated in mid-air and catching food out of the air like a fish in an aquarium.

Loumsa, along with astronauts Alan Bean and Owen Garriott, conducted extensive science and medical experiments on the second Skylab flight. He later flew on the test flight for the Columbia Space Shuttle in 1982.

Loumsa was initially scheduled to go on one of three remaining voyages to the moon, but NASA discontinued the Apollo program after 1972.

Though retired, Loumsa saw a few comets in the form of questions from the first and second grade audience.

"Did I see any aliens in space?" said Loumsa, repeating the first question. "No, only the people I knew."

"How long would it take to get to Pluto?" repeated Loumsa. He didn't remember exactly how long but recalled visiting a scaled model of the universe.

"I had to walk two and a half miles to get to Pluto," Loumsa said.

Loumsa was born in Grand Rapids and raised in Ann Arbor, where he lives and has his own business in aerospace research and development. He graduated from the University of Michigan in the late 1950s.

After 17 years in the space program, Loumsa made a brief foray into politics — losing in the 1984 U.S. Senate Republican primary to Jim Dunn.

Loumsa visits schools when time permits. Otherwise wife Gratia, whom he met at Ann Arbor Pioneer High, gives presentations.

"Clearly when you go around the world in an hour and a half, it becomes a smaller place," he said.

"Subsequently, it tends to make me impatient about the small and petty things in life. It tends to make you look at the bigger picture."

"It's kind of unifying. You sometimes wonder why we're not



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LEMAITRE

He's all ears: Wooddale second-grader Chris Bence listens to the former astronaut talk about the lack of gravity and that your nose never runs in space.

more united. You don't see any boundaries looking at the world in space."

Films such as "Apollo 13" and discussions about The Challenger disaster 10 years ago have heightened interest in the U.S. space program. During his presentation, Loumsa tries to impress upon young children that 12 Americans

walked on the moon before they were born.

Sometimes those accomplishments are taken for granted, he added.

"It's a part of their lives," Loumsa said. "Many of them feel they can (go into space) themselves."

"And they can."



Gravity of the situation: Jack Loumsa, former astronaut, talks about what the lack of gravity does to your face.

Attorney for carjacking suspect requests lesser robbery charge

BY BILL CONTANT
STAFF WRITER

Lavar Vernon Rounph's attorney describes his client as "a decent kid" who picked the wrong crime and the wrong time to commit it.

Rounph, 16, was arraigned on charges of assault with intent to rob while armed, which carries up to a life sentence in prison, kidnapping and carjacking, both 10-year felonies, before Oakland Circuit Court Judge Fred Mester Monday. A pretrial was not for Feb. 26 at 1:30 p.m.

The charges stem from an incident on the morning of Dec. 17 when a Farmington Hills woman was attacked as she got into her

car in the Kroger's parking lot at 11 Mile and Middlebelt after buying groceries.

Rounph was arrested after being pulled out of the car by Jeff Parlin, a frequent Kroger shopper who had been on his way into the store.

Rounph's attorney, Larry Kaluzny, said he plans to file a motion to reduce the robbery charge to unarmed robbery, which does not carry a life sentence.

"This is a life max case," he said after the proceeding. "He never showed the (concealed) knife to the woman, so it wasn't really an armed robbery."

Although police found a knife, duct tape and make-shift hand-

cuffs on the boy, the victim, Shirley Dailey, 67, testified during Rounph's preliminary examination in 47th District Court Dec. 27 that she was forced into the passenger seat of her car by the boy who tried to drive it away. She did not see a knife.

That is the issue, Kaluzny said. "I'm very comfortable with this judge," he said of Mester.

Kaluzny said the judge will also have an option to sentence Rounph, who has no prior felonies, as a juvenile if he's found guilty.

Rounph, who was originally held in the Oakland County Jail, is now in Children's Village with bond.

Kabbalah concert set for Sunday

Congregation Bait Kodesh will present a concert/lecture on Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism) with Rabbi Craig Allen on key-

boards and Glenn Berring on bass at 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 28, in the synagogue, 31874 W. Seven Mile, Livonia. For informa-

tion call 477-8974. Donation is \$5 for senior citizens, students and members; \$10 for others.

POLICE/FIRE CALLS

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week.

■ FIRE DEPARTMENT RUNS
Farmington Hills firefighters made 121 runs for the week of Jan. 16-21 including 69 medical emergencies (57 percent), 16 rescues (13 percent) and three fires.

■ FIRES
Farmington Hills firefighters from Station 2 put out a fire in a microwave after food was left in it unattended at 5 p.m. Jan. 18. The homeowner alerted her family after a smoke detector went off and they evacuated the home. Damage to contents was \$200 and firefighters suggested that the microwave be inspected by a certified repairman before using it again.

■ ASSAULT
A Livonia boy, 17, told Farmington Hills police that a Hills boy, 15, punched him in the parking lot of the Papa Romano's on 12 Mile at noon Jan. 18.

■ DRUGS
Farmington Hills police arrested a Farmington man, 22, and a Detroit man, 21, for possession of cocaine and drug paraphernalia at 3:55 a.m. Jan. 19 in a white 1993 Chevy Cavalier on westbound Walnut Lane in Farmington Hills.

Farmington Hills police arrested a Hills teen, 16, for possession of 31 tablets of LSD and marijua-

na paraphernalia after stopping a maroon 1986 Mercury Grand Marquis for running a red light on eastbound 12 Mile in Farmington Hills at 5:05 p.m. Jan. 19.

Farmington Hills police arrested two Westland women, 24 and 25, and a Livonia woman, 26, for possession of cocaine in a white 1993 Ford Escort parked in the lot of Steak and Ale on Orchard Lake at 2:08 a.m. Jan. 20.

Farmington Hills police arrested a Hills woman, 23, for possession of marijuana at her apartment at the Summit Apartments on Summit in Farmington Hills at 11 p.m. Jan. 22.

■ THEFTS
A tool box with tools worth \$300, a tool chest with computer parts worth \$10,000, a computer keyboard worth \$500, and golf clubs and a bag worth \$2,000 were stolen from a green 1994 Pontiac parked at the Independence Green Apartments on Jefferson in Farmington Hills Jan. 18-19. A \$300 AM/FM cassette stereo was stolen from a purple 1995 Chevy Cavalier parked at the Cedarbrook Apartments on Middlebelt and the dash was damaged (\$50) Jan. 19-20.

A \$2,400 diamond tennis bracelet was stolen from a 1995 Dodge Ram pickup parked on Colgate in Farmington Hills Dec. 3.

Three Apple Newton note pad computers (\$2,400) from ABC Warehouse on Orchard Lake in Farmington Hills Jan. 5-20.

Gap gift certificates (\$500) were stolen from the Sarah Fisher Cen-

ter on 12 Mile in Farmington Hills Jan. 13-22.

■ VANDALISM

The hood and passenger side were dented and one head light was broken causing \$600 in damage to a gray 1991 Ford Mustang at Marvelous Marvin's on Orchard Lake in Farmington Hills Jan. 19.

A tan 1996 Ford Windstar was damaged (\$400) at the Knight's Inn on Grand River in Farmington Hills at 11:20 p.m. Jan. 19.

Two tires were cut (\$200) on a 1995 Cadillac Seville parked at the Knight's Inn on Knight Drive in Farmington Hills Jan. 19-20.

The rear window was broken (\$200) on a teal 1995 Pontiac Transport parked on Witherston in Farmington Hills Jan. 21.

The passenger vent window was broken on a 1989 Dodge pickup truck while parked on Smithfield in Farmington Jan. 21.

Two fluorescent lights and a float in a toilet were broken in the men's restroom at Ole Toll Shell on Grand River in Farmington Jan. 20.

■ DRUNKEN DRIVING

Farmington Hills police arrested a Livonia man, 39, for driving a white and brown 1988 GMC Suburban at westbound Eight Mile and Inkster at 10:16 p.m. Jan. 14 while allegedly drunk. The man staggered out of Mulvan's on Eight Mile and drove the car er-



LILA BROUDE BRIDAL COLLECTION

We invite you to meet designer Lila Broude and see the entire spring collection of silk wedding gowns. Whatever theme you plan for your special day, our bridal experts can help make it a reality.

Saturday, January 27
10 am - 4 pm
Birmingham

Bridal Salon

Jacobson's

338 W. MAPLE RD. • BIRMINGHAM
MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, AND SATURDAY, 9:30 AM TO 6 PM.
THURSDAY AND FRIDAY, 9:30 AM TO 9 PM. SUNDAY, NOON TO 6 PM.
PHONE: 644-6900 • FAX: 645-8067

See POLICE, 6A