

Police open house (bow) wows kids

BY WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Hills police open house went to the dogs — and the kids — Sunday in what organizers call the best one yet. "We had more things for kids this year," said Officer Bonnie Unruh, one of the event's organizers. "We had the Moon Walk and Balloon Typhoon this year. There were kids lined up for them all day."

Police estimate that more than 2,000 visitors, young and old, came to the department's ninth open house Sunday, which ran from noon to 4 p.m.

Another new feature of this year's open house featured police dogs demonstrating how they sniff out drugs, disarm bad guys and protect their officers. The bleachers were filled as Luger, Blazer and Lana went through their paces jumping over an obstacle course and sniffing drugs in boxes, suitcases and a van.

Luger, who is the partner of West Bloomfield Officer Larry Mifaud, showed why in his five years of police work he has helped officers confiscate more than \$2 million in drugs and property through drug forfeiture.

Lana, from Dearborn, and Blazer from Flat Rock, too turns as well. Mifaud also shared a more personal story about his dog Luger.

"I had pulled over a drunk driver who attacked me," said the officer. "He got me down and began kicking me in the face. I was losing consciousness when Luger came out of the car, he trained to do, and pulled him off me." Mifaud said his gratitude to the Canadian German shepherd extends to limit. He'll make him the family pet when Luger, 7 that's 42 dog years, retires.

The dogs were friendly with their admirers after the show. Although they could not sign autographs, they do have trading cards, a sure sign of celebrity.

But as one lady in Red (Wings



Fingering a suspect: 7th grader Mathew Achtenioier gets fingerprinted by Lisa Castleman of the Farmington Hills Police Department's Records Bureau.

jersey) could attest, the dogs can get down to business when necessary.

"I wasn't worried," said Sandra Keavey of Dearborn after volunteering to be a criminal and then a friend to the dogs.

Luger showed he was ready to attack her, while being restrained by the officer. On command, the snarling pooch became all lips, tongue and wagging tail as he rubbed against his former enemy as if just adopted.

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Farmington Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer said not only were

for

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The West

Bloomfield Town-

ship Police

mounted and K-9

units, the Oak-

land County Dra-

gon Tank, an

A.T.F. bomb

truck, Ferndale

police robot,

Michigan State

Police S.W.A.T.

vehicle and

antique police vehicles were all

represented.

The Farmington Community

Jazz Band entertained while

masquos Parkey the Panda,

Louie the Lightning Bug and

other mascots.

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Confiscated arms: Diane Roy and her father Ken Roy inspect weapons that were confiscated by Hills police officers. Sgt. Kruse stands to the right while officer Art Schultz looks on.

crash dummies Vince and Larry made some new young friends.

The jail tour was a favorite as in past years and the FATS display on the police firing range that throws up images and requires those using a special target gun to use good judgment was also well-attended.

"It is the firearms training that we use," said Officer John Regorrah, a crime prevention specialist. "We are trained on this every year."

There were some new adventures for youngsters as well. A "Balloon Typhoon" that allows youngsters to pay among swirling balloons and the "Moon Walk," which let kids defy gravity were favorites. And "Safety Town" gave kids from 3-6 a

chance to test their driving skills in a miniature town.

As always, there were plenty of children's games and a refreshment booth run by the Optimist Club.

The "Showmobile" featured a puppet show with Officer Friendly and the Farmington Hills Fire Department clowns (the kind who wear face paint) as well as the K-9 demonstration.

Lapping it up: Luger, a member of West Bloomfield's K-9 unit is featured on one of the trading cards.

Many area departments were represented at the event.

"This gives the community, and especially the kids, a chance to talk with police, to have a better understanding about what we do in a friendly atmosphere," Unruh said.

Hills plans efficiencies with new computer technology

BY WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Cities, like businesses, schools and other institutions, are learning the benefits of spending money on new technology to save on everything else.

Farmington Hills appears ready to take the computer plunge.

After years of trying to improve its computer system and link existing systems, Farmington Hills is looking at a total overhaul that would cut down on paper work and improve efficiency.

"We've wanted to do this for years," said Mike Lasley, Hills director of administrative services. "But when the budget came through, there just wasn't anything left over."

But a management audit in 1994 found that despite its high rating overall, Farmington Hills was suffering because of outdated technology. More than 100 different systems were used.

"Not only did we have different departments using different systems, we had internal networks that could not be accessed throughout a department," said Councilman Jon Grant, who has pushed for technology improvements. "It made doing anything very expensive."

In fact, in some departments four copies of a single report had to be made and physically filed in four different places. Workers often have to physically transport records and other information to another building.

The management audit, conducted by the Boston firm Bennett, Isaacson Associates, helped push the city toward what many in the administration had

already wanted - a new interfaced computer system.

The cost of installing such a system starts at \$1.5 million and doesn't include specialized for assessment records, tax rolls, police and fire reports.

Lasley said the three-phased technology refit would include new hardware in the first two phases would involve new hardware and "groupware" such as E-mail capability, spreadsheet and word processing programs. More specialized software would come later.

"The money for the first two phases would come from a combination of existing sources including the sewer and water fund (\$330,000), capital improvement fund (\$870,000), Northridge property sale (\$250,000) and \$50,000 from the public safety millage. There would be no tax increase."

"This is what a lot of cities are going through," said Roberta Estes of Information Access Strategies. "It's very common."

Estes, who is a consultant with the company, studied Farmington Hills to see what type of system the city would need. She specializes in computer and information technology for municipalities.

"The legacy of not integrating systems early on is that you have no network," she said.

The company handles the software needs of some large concerns, including advertising giant W.B. Doner of Southfield.

Estes' report was presented to the Farmington Hills City Council at a study session.

OBITUARIES

EVELYN MARIE GABEL

Mrs. Gabel, 83, of Farmington Hills died May 18 in Botsford Continuing Health Center, Farmington Hills.

Born in Chicago, Illinois; Mrs. Gabel was a switchboard operator for Consumer Power for 10 years.

Survivors include her son Bruce and Grant; daughter, Arlene Cox; brother, Edwin Hasley; nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Services were at the Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, Farmington, with the Rev. Brian Tweedie officiating. Burial was in Michigan Memorial Cemetery, Flat Rock.

Memorials may be made to Multiple Sclerosis Society, Michigan Chapter, Inc., 26111 Evergreen, Suite 100, Southfield 48076-4481.

MICHAEL L. ZAROFF

Mr. Zaroff, 86, of Dearborn Heights died May 19 in Oakwood Hospital, Dearborn.

Survivors include his wife, Mary; daughter, Janeene Lemieux of Farmington Hills.

Mass was celebrated May 22 in Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church. Burial was in St. Hedwig Cemetery, Dearborn Heights.

KATHRYN BRENDEL

Mrs. Brendle, 82, of Livonia died May 18. Born in Bay City, Mrs. Brendle was a homemaker.

Survivors include her daughters, Susan Gray of Livonia and Marlene Theobald of Farmington; brother, Jack Taylor; sisters, Grace, Ruth and Gertrude; four grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Services were May 22 at the Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, Farmington, with the Rev. Stanley Holder of Harvest Temple Church officiating. Burial was in Glen Eden Cemetery, Livonia.

Memorials may be made to the Michigan Cancer Foundation, 16831 W. 12 Mile Road, Lathrup Village 48076-9808 or the Michigan Heart Association, P.O. Box 721129, Berkley 48072.

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