

Just Kid-ing



STAFF PHOTO BY REASON LEMMON

That's a big bubble: Sponsored by the Farmington Community Library, the bubble-making activity is one of the most popular things to do at the Farmington Founders Festival. Youngsters like the lad in the above photo made huge bubbles from tables of suds. In the photo at the top of the page, Kaurie Koning, 10, confronts a sheep



Sizzle sparkles: Sizzle the cat, held by owner Jimmy Fraser, 6, of West Bloomfield, won the Ugliest Animal award. Above, Molly Callahan, 5 1/2, and her mom Mary laugh as they watch Chris Callahan, 8, on the stage.



It's a child's day to romp in the park

BY LAURIE HUMPHREY
STAFF WRITER

In today's world of doctor's appointments, school and clothes shopping, one normally finds the parent dragging the child around. But the tables were turned during Kids' Day Tuesday at the Farmington Founders' Festival.

Young children were definitely in charge as youngsters with parents in tow hopped from one booth to the next - from pony rides to the public safety booths to the main stage area and 29th-annual Pet Show.

In fact, looking at the crowd surrounding the main stage for the 1 p.m. Pet Show, it appeared as if the children also got premium seating, leaving their parents to fend for themselves behind the rows of people.

Such was the case for Josh Wrobel's father. He watched his 13-year-old son take first place in the best presentation of a caged pet category from 20 yards back.

"I was confident I could win," the modest Josh said about his top finish. His father just smiled.

Josh entered this year's contest with his pet hedgehog, Thistle. The cage boasted a log cabin for Thistle with pretend vines and a sign that read: Thistle of Hedgehog Hollow.

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As I interviewed the Farmington Hills teen, adults pushed their way through the crowd to get a peak at the award-winning animal and it's master - just another example that kids were the ones to listen to on Kids' Day. Mr. Wrobel and I just stepped out of the way.

Brittney Lyons, 5, was also basking in her glory - a second place finish with her Collie, Whisper.

After prompting the dog to sit, lay down and jump up for the Best Trained Pet category, the Farmington Hills youth ran off to play with her sister and friends, leaving her mom to answer my questions. Just another

example that kids could do what they wanted to on Kids' Day.

Taking first in the Best Dressed Pet and Owner category, Joshua Cook, 9, also used Kids' Day to do things he may not normally do, such as get on a stage in front of tons of people he didn't know.

"I was nervous," admitted the Farmington Hills boy, "because it was the first time I've done something like that and because of the crowd."

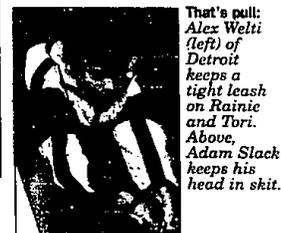
But he gathered his courage and fulfilled his "Kids' Day" leadership role by marching up on that stage dressed as a mustard bottle, with his dog, Tootsie dressed as an Oscar Mayer hot dog.

Standing backstage for the interview, Cook received rave reviews from adults who were focused on the winner and didn't even realize they were squeezing me away from my interviewee. Oh well - the last example that kids had all the power on Kids' Day and adults, well we were in their way.

Forty-six children under age 16 entered the "Pet Show". Farmington Hills mayor Aldo Vagnuzzi, Farmington mayor Joanne McShane and Miss Farmington/Farmington Hills Audrie Chernaukas judged the hour-long event.



Tootsie's a winner: Joshua Cook, 9, of Farmington Hills, reacts to hearing that his dog Tootsie has won first place in the Best Dressed competition. At left is Danielle Lyons, 6, of Farmington Hills and her dog Whisper.



That's pull: Alex Welti (left) of Detroit keeps a tight leash on Rainie and Tori. Above, Adam Slack keeps his head in skit.