

Canine sparks doggone debate

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A Farmington Hills ice cream parlor operator made sure Sunday wasn't a dog day after all.

An argument ensued between the manager of Baskin Robbins on Orchard Lake and a female customer over her dog, which is being trained for Leader Dogs for the Blind. The woman filed a complaint with the Farmington Hills police, saying the man grabbed her by the arm and forced her out of the store after she and the dog entered the establishment around 5 p.m.

A spokeswoman for Leader Dogs for the Blind in Rochester Hills said the store's proprietor had the right to ask the woman and the Golden Labrador Retriever named "Buddy" to leave. The ruckus occurred when the woman tried to explain why the dog was with her.

The woman admitted swearing at the couple running the store as she left.

"I said a couple of things I shouldn't have said," said Lauri Fenster, who was with her mother during the incident. "... I was not aggressive until he touched me."

Leader dog trainers are encouraged to take their pet projects into stores and other places a person who is blind or hearing impaired normally would go.

State law prohibits denying access to a fully-trained leader dog accompanied by an owner who is vision and hearing impaired.

"The access laws that allow guide dogs to enter buildings do not cover puppy raisers," said Samantha Ziegenmeyer, Leader Dogs for the Blind Puppy Raiser coordinator. "What we do is ask volunteers to get permission first."

"If permission is not granted, they have no recourse but to leave."

Fenster said she tried to explain why the dog was with her inside the ice cream store in the first place, but the manager insisted that the dog be taken outside.

The manager told police the woman swore at him and his wife. He denies grabbing her by the arm. He put his hand on her shoulder to guide the woman to

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Mirko Stojkovic
—Baskin Robbins operator

the door, police reports said.

There were two people: One could have easily stayed with the dog outside, said Mirko Stojkovic, who runs the Baskin Robbins.

"The dog was very nervous and the customers were very nervous," Stojkovic said. "She can teach that dog outside, not in the store where there are 20 customers eating ice cream and there is (dog) hair flying all around."

One witness said the woman gave the proprietors the middle finger upon leaving.

When trainers run into a problem, they're told it's best to comply and return later to explain the leader dog program, Ziegenmeyer said.

"You have to make sure you are educating and not further escalating the problem," Ziegenmeyer said. "We ask them not to be confrontational."

Leaders Dogs for the Blind have anywhere from 400 to 500 volunteers in its Puppy Raiser program. All volunteers are informed of the guidelines.

"Obviously we can't control everyone who leaves here," Ziegenmeyer said.

Fenster has been with the program since January. "Buddy" accompanies her inside places such as Meijer, Farmer Jack, Kmart and Oakland Mall and there have been no problems, she said. The canine wears a bandana to identify him as a leader dog in training.

Dogs spend 12 to 15 months with trainers before they're considered for leader dog certification. Trainers have the option of adopting the dog if it's not accepted.

In Buddy's case, Fenster said, "I will."

Downpour delights



Rain drops: Instead of on his head, they keep falling in a cup held out by Eric Scott, 4½ of Farmington Hills. Scott catches rain water at the picnic pavilion at Shawawsee Park in Farmington on Tuesday afternoon's brief downpour. Above, Alex Tobar, 5½, Stephanie Sanders, 4, and Michael Tobar, 3½ (behind Tobar), splash through the quickly formed puddles with an umbrella even though they were already soaked. All of these kids are siblings of Highmadow kids who, along with a group of moms, come to Shawawsee Park every Tuesday for playgroup.

**STAFF PHOTOS
BY SHARON
LEMIEUX**

Farmington High grad relishes West Point rigors that lie ahead

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Christina Munoz finds out this week about life at the U.S. Military Academy, but the Farmington High graduate has already gained a few pointers on West Point.



"The first day you get there they'll say, 'Look to your left; look to your right. One of you will not make it to graduation,'" said Munoz, who's been boning up on the academy since being one of only 1,200 accepted out of 13,000 applicants.

Munoz is determined not to be one of the 33 percent that drops out of the academy, known for its rigorous physical and military training as well as academic work.

The recent Farmington High graduate has faced challenges before. She learned to fire a gun at 5, play the trumpet and managed to work at Bill Knapp's after school and maintain a well-rounded academic schedule.

She's under no delusions about West Point. Life will be hard, Munoz said.

Munoz visited the academy in

New York state and read "West Point Way of Leadership" by retired Col. Larry R. Donitchner.

"It goes through how they tear you down to ground zero and how it's a humbling experience," Munoz said. "The experience also teaches you to handle pressure."

Unlike the Citadel, West Point has accepted women since the 1976. Female enrollment ranges from 12 to 15 percent.

"There are no special concessions or considerations made for women," said Captain Brendan McKiernan, who works in admissions for the U.S. Military Academy. "The qualification standards are consistent for all candidates."

Munoz wasn't dissuaded by highly-publicized events like the woman who won a court battle to attend the all-male Citadel only to quit.

"Of course there will be hazing, but as far as sexual harassment, you probably have just as much at high school," she said. "It didn't affect me at all."

She'll start as a "plobe" and endure basic training for the first six weeks. Then there's "reorganization week" when the seniors return before classes start. That's when the hazing commences.

For instance, senior class people will question "plobes" and make them recite things on the spot.

"It all has a purpose," Munoz said. "It gets you thinking on your feet and it gets you to handle pressure, especially if you're in a war-like situation."

Munoz is preparing for the physical challenges, too. She's been working out with a personal trainer at the YMCA. Running, push-ups and sit-ups are part of the regimen, Munoz said. She's up to 35 push-ups and 60 sit-ups.

She's already toned herself academically.

At Farmington High, Munoz was a member of the National Honor Society, Math and Spanish clubs. She was one of the 5 percent nationwide selected for the Who's Who of American High School Students and was nominated twice for the National Young Leaders Conference.

In line with her relishing challenges, she jumped a grade in math and took a Calculus II course at Oakland Community College. She also conducted cancer research in ophthalmology as part of a University of Wisconsin summer program.

She'll pursue an engineering degree at West Point and will be commissioned as a Second Lieutenant after graduation.

"She's an outstanding young lady," said Captain McKiernan, who worked with Munoz during the admission process. "She has qualities of an outstanding young cadet."

Police investigate cause of crash that injures 2

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills police are investigating whether alcohol played a role in a traffic accident that left two drivers injured.

At 9:30 p.m. Saturday, a 1985 Ford Thunderbird traveling east on 12 Mile Road struck a 1989 Chevrolet Corsica turning left onto southbound Orchard Lake from westbound 12 Mile.

The police report said the driv-

er of the Ford Thunderbird, a Farmington Hills man, 21, told an emergency technician and a doctor that he'd been drinking. Due to his injuries, though, police could not have him perform field sobriety tests and had blood taken from him.

The driver was reported in good condition at Botsford Hospital Monday. The driver of the Chevy Corsica, a Livonia girl, 16, was treated and released.

Hills police are awaiting for

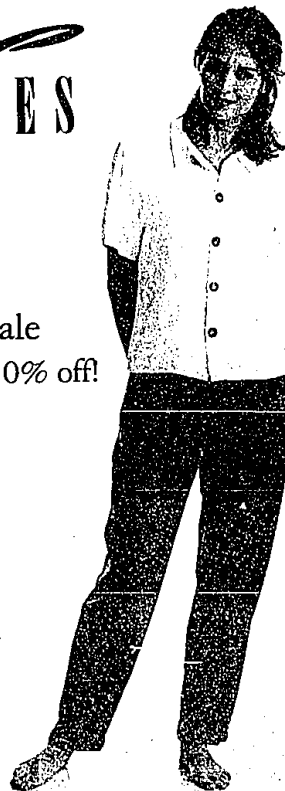
results of blood samples sent to the Michigan State Police crime lab. Results could take 10 days to two weeks.

Police have not determined who was at fault. Both drivers and witnesses gave conflicting reports as to what led to the crash.

"She says she shouldn't have turned, but a witness said she had a green (left turn) arrow," Green said. "It's undetermined as to who was at fault."

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