

## Pets from page A1

Pets as small as sea monkeys to large horses took part in previous shows, which gave awards in many categories such as waggiest tail, shaggiest, best presentation of a caged animal and fattest pet.

Owners could get creative, too. A woman dressed up in red as a ketchup bottle and brought along her dachshund, which was encased in a foam rubber bun to depict a hot dog.

"They used to come up with the most imaginable costumes," Richardson said. "It was really neat, but last year, a kid put on a Red Wings sweat shirt and put a puck in the dog's mouth and came dressed as I don't know what."

The pet show has always coincided with Founders Festival. At first, the event took place in the Plaza Veterinary Hospital lot and was sponsored by surrounding merchants.

In subsequent years, pet owners showcased their animals in the Downtown Center and at the Festival Showmobile. Since 1984, the show has been part of Kids Day in Shawwanee Park.

Richardson had no problem finding judges. Mayors, citizens of the years and Miss Farmington/Farmington Hills served in that

capacity. If there is an outcry, Richardson said he'd be willing to do a pet show. Otherwise, the veterinarian said, "It's been a great ride."

The number of participants started to slide below 60 around 1988. The lone exception came in 1994 when 90 kids and pets turned out. In recent years, the veterinarian has passed out fliers to the parks and recreation department, video game arcades and restaurants to drum up interest.

It's not for a lack of pet ownership, either, Richardson noted. Plaza Veterinary Hospital is as busy as ever.

"I think the small, mundane and unsophisticated things that kids used to get excited about, they don't do them anymore," Richardson said. "They'd rather sit at that game and play Nintendo."



Fat cat: An entry last year.

## Editor from page A1

Larry O'Connor, Community Life Editor Mary Rodriguez and office receptionist Katie McManus. Bresler joined the staffs of the Plymouth and Canton Observers in 1984, after four years with the Livonia Observer.

A Livonia resident, Bresler has won several awards for photographs including a first place for breaking news in the 1997 Michigan Press Association Editorial Contest.

Varga, a 14-year veteran of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, has been editor since

December 1996. A Livonia resident, he has served as community editor at O&E papers in Birmingham, Rochester and Troy, before his most recent position in Farmington.

"I leave the Farmington Observer with mixed feelings," Varga said. "While I'm excited to take on a new challenge, I have developed a great affection for the Farmington community and the people I've met and worked with here. It's a wonderful town, a place where the largest city in Oakland County meets up with a real small-town feeling."

## Fireworks from page A1

The hoodown, which drew nearly 70, featured dinner and square dancing in the Coach House at Botsford Inn, complete with its wooden floors, horse collars and straw and square-dance caller and live music.

On Saturday at Heritage Park, Jean Fox, former Hills mayor

and historian, was keynote speaker at the opening ceremony which recognized past and present community leaders, longtime residents and essay contest winners.

At nearby Spicer House, porridge for youngsters, live poets, a barbershop quartet, a repemner and blacksmith plus exhibits of historic farm equipment focused on teaching about the city's rural past.

Music, food - including a huge birthday cake - and the fireworks display Saturday night capped events at Heritage, while community leaders and others gathered Sunday at 11 Mile and Middlebelt to look to the city's future with the groundbreaking for the new Memorial Park.

"What a fun family time!" enthused Hills council member and celebration co-chairwoman

Nancy Bates about the weekend's celebration. "There was something for everyone."

She said comments she's received center on "Let's have those fireworks every year."

"We certainly intend to get it under discussion at council," she said.

The only major negative was the rain shower Saturday afternoon which prevented all but the Farmington Area Philharmonic Orchestra from performing.

Traffic flow, crowd control and all other elements went smoothly, officials said.

But if people remember anything from the 25th anniversary, it will be the fireworks.

"It's amazing how impressive that thing was," said Abe Aon, a planning committee member.

"I've never seen fireworks so beautiful and colorful."

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