

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL REISLER

Getting ready: Bryan Collins of Collins Signs hangs one of 22 banners heralding the start of Farmington Founder's Festival.

Festival from page A1

Cassidy's shops moved down the street from the Village Mall to 33246 Grand River, a free-standing structure facing the Farmington Bakery. The gift shop takes up the front of the building; the salon is in the back.

According to Cassidy, plans are to provide bargain-hunting browsers with free refreshments, such as ice tea and lemonade while displaying bargain-priced store merchandise on the sidewalk.

Also putting merchandise outside will be Larry Salen, owner of Clothes Encounter on Grand River.

"We push out a ton of casual women's contemporary clothes," said Salen, calling the festival the biggest customer draw of the year. "It always helps build our customer base. We have such a good response."

Salen did note one particular downside, however - the lack of accessible parking. "In general, parking (in downtown) is a problem, and not just for the festival."

Parking lots generally are scattered throughout the central business district.

Once folks do find parking spaces, they spend money and soak up the fun-filled environment.

"It's beautiful," said Ali Almansoop, owner of Dimitri's of Farmington. "There's a lot of atmosphere, people from out of town. And everybody benefits, from restaurants to candy stores to grocery stores."

Almansoop said Dimitri's won't offer anything out of the ordinary for the festival. But his 110-seat eatery usually is filled

■ 'It's beautiful. There's a lot of atmosphere, people from out of town. And everybody benefits, from restaurants to candy stores to grocery stores.'

*Ali Almansoop
—Dimitri's owner*

to the brim for the event.

Another downtown restaurant, The Pasta Stop on Farmington Road, will provide curbside cuisine, however. Owner Roger Ratkowski intends to set up a grill in front, cooking kielbasa and Italian sausage.

Ratkowski said the restaurant will also set up a food booth in the Downtown Farmington Center, where a lot of the action will be between Friday, July 9 and Sunday, July 11.

"We need more of them (such community events)," said Ratkowski, who along with Dennis Page of Page's Food & Spirits, are just starting the second season of Monday evening Cruise the Grand classic car displays.

The Founders Festival "brings a hometown feel to the area and helps smaller businesses such as ourselves," Ratkowski said.

He recalled the 1997 festival, when The Pasta Shop set up a food booth, even though the restaurant had not yet officially opened. Ratkowski said he wanted to gauge whether the public would patronize another Italian

dining spot in Farmington.

"It was very positive," he said. "We opened in November of 1997 and (business) has been growing ever since."

Over at the Downtown Farmington Center, Big Apple Bagel again will be under the big top, with a tent and table set up on the sidewalk, said owner Dave Henninger.

"People can buy stuff outside, instead of coming into the store," said Henninger.

Customers may also purchase ice cream and "Smoothies," a blended fruit drink, as well as receive discounts on bagel sandwiches.

Tom Petros, owner of the Cigar Emporium and Wine Emporium stores in the Downtown Farmington Center, said the Founders Festival gives him a chance to promote daily specials, such as "buy five cigars, get one free."

Henninger said he is looking forward to the festival, but has concerns about the continuing empty retail space where Farmer Jack used to be.

"How much it (the vacancy) affects it I don't know," Henninger said. "But I think Farmer Jack not being here affects such and every business in this center."

City Manager Frank Lauhoff and Judy Downey, executive director of the Downtown Development Authority, dismissed any notion that the empty Farmer Jack space will detract from the celebration.

"It's certainly not attractive," conceded Lauhoff. "But the festival isn't about one location or one store out of 150."

Play from page A1

BobCate to move mountains of woodchips into place, Richards said.

Volunteers worked despite being soaked. "As wet as a person can be," he said.

"They were an incredible group of people," Richards said. The only ones who left early were "a couple (who) ran out of gas."

Incorrect parts shipped for the toddlers' glider swing set prevented it from being completed, he said, and a change in plans for the entrance area - extending the metal ramp instead of creating a land-

bridge - necessitated ordering more parts.

In addition, a late cage in number of signature pickets purchased by residents for the playscape fence - it jumped from over 900 to 1,600 - delayed their delivery, Richards said.

Picnic tables also needed to be finished, he added.

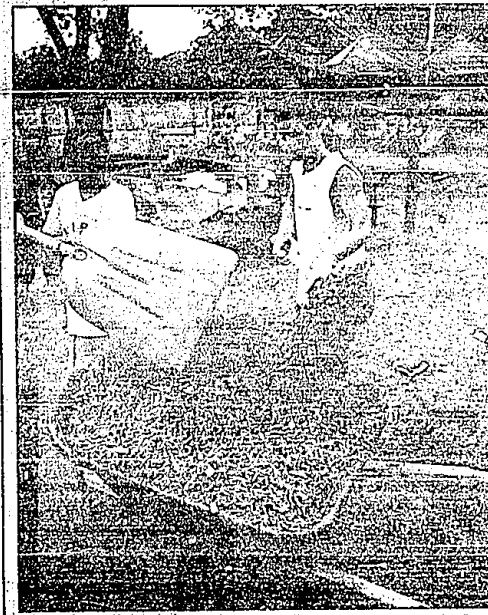
All necessary items are expected to be on hand for the weekend effort, Richards said.

To volunteer or for additional information, call either Richards at City Hall, (248) 474-5503, or Nancy Tashman,



Volunteer: Wendy Schulman spreads woodchips at the base of the playscape.

fundraising co-chair, at (248) 476-8562.



Working hard: Volunteers Andy Larson and Ryan Deisenroth load woodchips into a wheelbarrow during a recent work effort at the Kids World PlayScape in Farmington's Shiawassee Park. Organizers are asking the community for volunteers for the holiday weekend. To volunteer or for additional information, call either Richards at City Hall, (248) 474-5503, or Nancy Tashman, fundraising co-chair, at (248) 476-8562.

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British Airways, the City of Southfield, the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, and MetroTimes cordially invite you to the 11th annual

SOUTHFIELD GOLD CUP POLO COMPETITION

Southfield Polo Team vs. Palm Beach Polo Team

on Saturday, July 17, 1999 at 2:00 pm • Rain date: Saturday, July 24

at Word of Faith International Christian Center (formerly Duns Scotus), Evergreen and 9 Mile roads

Tickets: \$5 in advance/\$6 at the gate/\$1 children 12 & under

Proper attire requested: Men - sportcoats • Women - low heels recommended

For information: Southfield Community Relations Department, 248/354-4854

Please Note - Parking is available in the north lot of the Southfield Civic Center (Evergreen and 10 1/2 Mile) with complimentary shuttle bus service provided to the Polo Field.

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Star Theatres

SPORTS

Holiday delays regular trash pickup

The Independence Day holiday on Sunday, July 4, will push back refuse/recycling collections in Farmington and Farmington Hills by a day.

There will be no pickup on Monday, July 5. Collections will resume on Tuesday, July 6 and run

through Saturday, July 10, the latter being the date on which Friday's trash will be picked up. The regular collection schedule will resume Monday, July 12.

CLARIFICATION

A story in the June 20 Farmington Observer, about Farmington Public Schools' \$3.1 million computer and technology package indicated that it included the award of \$950,000 to Comp USA

for laptop computers. The total of the Comp USA bid was correct. But the story should have also stated that laptops only accounted for about \$230,000 of that amount. The remainder

went for classroom computer monitors (\$430,000); classroom CAD/graphics computer monitors (\$234,000); and assorted printers (\$58,000).