

Career Hills officer Bledsoe moves on to Ferris State

BY PAUL R. PACE
STAFF WRITER

Martin Bledsoe started in the police business at a good time nearly 31 years ago. When he started with the Farmington Township Police Department in 1972, federal grants supplied tuition money for officers seeking higher-education while working part-time, Bledsoe said.

He put that incentive to good use.

Through the years, the assistant police chief managed to earn his associate's and bachelor's degrees, then obtained his master's degree in public administration in 1991.

"There was a push to change the way officers do their jobs," he said.

Learning more and passing along that knowledge to his co-workers has been a staple in his career with the Farmington Hills Police Department.

That's evident in his long-time participation in the Michigan Chapter of the FBI National Academy Associates, of which he currently serves as president.

The assistant police chief will be retiring in early July and moving into a different role as director of public safety at Ferris State University near Big Rapids, Mich.

"Looking back, there is no doubt in my mind I made the right decision," Bledsoe said. "I love what I do."

He admitted that putting his life on the line, dealing firsthand with some of the ugliest aspects of the human condition is part of the job. Holding on to the good he can do has kept him grounded.

"It's a huge blessing to have this effect on people's lives," he said.

"I've been fortunate in the promotions I've had, but I took those opportunities when they came forward."

Bledsoe for years has organized the department's annual 10K run for muscular dystrophy, something with which he's proud to be associated.

The effort has raised tens of thousands of dollars for research.

As a kid, Bledsoe was often spotted talking with police officers in his neighborhood. Hearing about their jobs fascinated him, he said.

So there was little question



BILL BASLER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

After more than 30 years with the Farmington Hills Police Department, Assistant Chief Marty Bledsoe is heading to Big Rapids and Ferris State University.

to his career direction after high school.

He was just 19 when he started as a cadet with Farmington Township police, based on the encouragement of his girlfriend at the time, Marge, who, just two years later, became his wife.

The couple, who enjoy vacationing in their Upper Peninsula cabin, have two grown children, Danny, 23, a Blackhawk helicopter pilot, and Karyn, 20, a student at Central Michigan University.

Bledsoe was promoted to officer in 1973; sergeant in 1979; lieutenant in 1986; inspector in 1996 and finally to assistant chief in 1997. He now oversees the operations bureau.

He said he was lucky to work in a community where the residents support their police.

Leaving Farmington Hills will be bittersweet, he added. "I love the people here, but

life comes with changes."

Police Chief William Dwyer said Bledsoe has an outstanding reputation in and outside the department.

"Ferris' gain is our loss," he said. "We appreciate all his efforts and dedication throughout the years. He's a true professional."

Bledsoe said he's encouraging folks to send their kids to Ferris.

"I'll look after them and love them like they're my own," he said with a laugh.

Bledsoe said as he leaves he likes to think he's made some difference in community.

"The highest compliment I've been given is when people say I'm a man of integrity."

The city will be hosting a retirement ceremony for Bledsoe at 2 p.m. June 27 at City Hall.

pace@oe.hometown.com | (248) 477-5450

Project HOPE yard sale will benefit Haitian mothers, kids

BY KINDERLY MORTSON
STAFF WRITER

Would you believe making a purchase at a yard sale this weekend will help improve maternal and child health care in Haiti. The Project HOPE League's first yard sale will be held 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, June 7, to benefit the health care needs of both Haitian mothers and children.

A country slightly smaller than the state of Maryland, Haiti has the unfortunate distinction of having the highest rate of poverty, infant mortality, child mortality and maternal mortality in the Western Hemisphere.

According to Jackie Kendall, vice president of a local volunteer group of Project HOPE supporters (comprised of business professionals), humanitarian aid is offered thanks to the financial support they provide through area fund-raisers and benefits including the upcoming yard sale.

Project HOPE League has approximately 150-175 local members (Livonia, Farmington, West Bloomfield, Troy, Rochester) including a board of directors comprised of 32 professional individuals. They meet on a monthly basis to concentrate their efforts on three to four fund-raisers annually.

"We have a number of auctions and benefits throughout the year, but we thought with the present economy a yard sale would be more appropriate and bring us some much needed revenue and possibly new members," said Kendall a West Bloomfield resident. "A ton

of donations have been pouring in and we have a lot to offer people."

HELPING HAND

Health Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE) strives to "achieve sustainable advances in health care around the world by implementing health education programs, conducting health policy research, and providing humanitarian assistance in areas of need. With the support and assistance of President Dwight Eisenhower, Project HOPE was founded by Dr. Walsh in 1958.

A U.S. Navy ship was refitted to become the first peacetime hospital ship (SS HOPE) which made its maiden voyage in 1960. The ship made 11 trips, by invitation only, from Peru to Tunisia and Brazil.

Although the ship was forced into retirement in 1974, today the primary activity of The People-to-People Foundation, Inc. is to maintain 80 programs in 31 countries around the world. The headquarters are based in Millwood, VA.

"We want people to come out this weekend because where else can you find something you absolutely cannot live without, at a good price, but more importantly know you are contributing to a humanitarian effort to improve health conditions around the globe which ultimately effects all of us," said Kendall.

One hundred percent of the proceeds from Saturday's sale will be given to Project HOPE for the Haiti project.

Kendall said she is proud to have been a member for the past 15 years because how many other organizations dedicate over 90 percent of their donations directly to their programming. "In 2002 we set a record with 94 percent going to programs around the world," added the Project HOPE League's vice president.

TREASURE TROVE

The daylong sale features a substantial amount of yard sale items, most donated by members, including upholstered furniture, a china cabinet and a golfing package will be offered as a silent auction item. At an estimated value of \$400 it includes two nights lodging for two at Nader's Lakeshore Lodge in Ludington with 36 holes of golf at Lakeshore Links.

Kendall hopes readers will mark their calendar for these additional fundraising opportunities for Project HOPE:

■ Sept. 14, Theatre Party at the Gem Theatre in downtown Detroit.

■ Oct. 17, Theatre Party at Genit's Hole-in-the-Wall, Northville.

■ Nov. 24, 14th Annual Holiday of HOPE at the Heathers.

For more information about supporting Project HOPE or becoming a member call Jackie Kendall, (248) 538-0777 or visit www.projecthope.org

The Project HOPE yard sale will be held at 38603 Eight Mile Road, east of I-275 at the residence of one of the group's members.

New recipes
every Thursday
in Taste

HELP • HELP • HELP • HELP • HELP • HELP

Collector
wants to BUY your
Old Electric Trains

Any Condition or Quantity
Please Call!
Doug Nash
(734) 461-9729
or toll free
(866) 743-8770

NEW! \$799

BRONCO

100% OF INDELS
ALL ON SALE

NEW OFFER
6 MONTHS

ALL PRICE MATCHES

The Best Hospital... 2047 W 12 Mile, Sterling Heights, MI 48060
6 Top Selling Shop... 11-100 100.00 PM 10-0

Last Weekend, America Became ONE NATION UNDER BRUCE!

THE TODAY SHOW
UPROARIOUS! WILDLY FUNNY

EBERT & ROEPER
TWO THUMBS UP!
Carrey made me laugh so hard I had tears in my eyes.

THE NEW YORK TIMES
A RAMBUNCTIOUSLY FUNNY COMEDY!

JIM CARREY
BRUCE ALMIGHTY

SEVERAL TIMES IN SPECIAL ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY RANKS THE BEST MOVIE OF THE YEAR

NOW SHOWING!

12 THEATERS TO CHOOSE FROM

12 THEATERS TO CHOOSE FROM

12 THEATERS TO CHOOSE FROM

You're cordially invited...

to a 3 Day Only Special Showing of Ultimate Luxury Motor Homes

Thursday, Friday & Saturday, June 5, 6, 7

PREVOST

WANDERLodge

ISATA BY DYNAMAX

SPECIAL PRICING

SPECIAL FINANCING

BORN FREE at FACTORY DIRECT PRICES

hosted by...
HOLLAND Motor Homes

HOLLAND, MICHIGAN 800-221-7197

SHOW LOCATION: NOVI, MICHIGAN - WYNDAM GARDEN HOTEL
off 96 at exit 162 & Novi Rd. 42100 Crescent Blvd

SHOW HOURS: THURS & FRI, JUNE 5 & 6 10:00 AM - 8:00 PM SAT, JUNE 7 9:00 AM - 3 PM

THINKING ABOUT CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONING?

FREE ESTIMATES (734) 531-930

Our 24 hour service

UNITED THERMATURE

8919 MIDLAND AVE. LIVONIA

It's Not Just 5¢ Cold Storage. Cleaning. Repairs. Remodels.

It's By Far The Best For Care Available!

Dittich

Phone: (313) 973-3300

1722 W. 12 Mile

Westland, MI 48090