

It was a day for kids play in the park

By Susan Steinnmueller
staff writer

IT WAS hot. It was crowded. And it was fun.

It was Kids Day, held Tuesday in Farmington's Shawassee Park. Sunny weather brought out crowds of mothers, children and other family members to enjoy a day of games, rides, events and other activities designed for the younger generation.

Sponsored by the Farmington Area YMCA, Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department, Farmington Community Library and Farmington Community Center, Kids Day traditionally helps kick off

the annual mid-summer Farmington Founders Festival, which heats up today and runs through Saturday.

"I think it's the biggest crowd we've had," said Dorothy Richard, Kids Day committee member. "Of course it's hot, and it's been a good day to be out — but I think a lot of people in Farmington look forward to Kids Day, I really do."

"It was well organized — the hard work everybody put into it sure showed," said Colleen Buckle of Farmington Hills. "It was very nice. My kids really look forward to it."

"It was fun — I liked the rides," said her son Kyle, 9. "I liked the Moonwalk — I did that one twice."

THE RIDES were one of the biggest draws for kids, who waited in lines to try them all at 75 cents a ticket, or to try their favorites twice. The 11 rides this year featured a mix designed to please kids of all ages — from the Moonwalk and the Rocket Ride to the Tubs-O-Fun, the Boats and the Merry-go-Round.

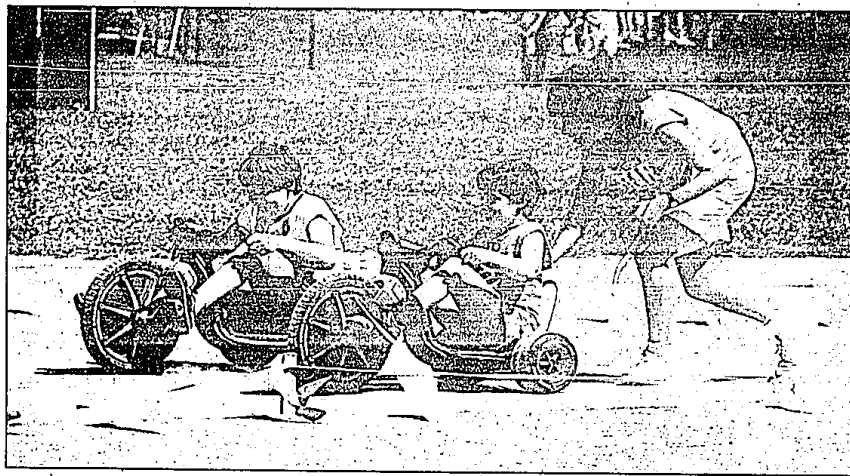
"I think they're getting into everything," said Vern Rego, of Regular Enterprises Inc., in Plymouth, who puts on the rides.

Roe Abshire, youth activities officer for the Farmington Elks Lodge, which helps with ticket sales for the rides, said, "It was really busy this morning. I think we had a much better day than we have had in the last couple of years."

Also doing hectic sales were the concession stands, run as fundraisers by local community groups. As the day got hotter, long lines formed as people waited to buy refreshments, which were enjoyed from shaded spots.

The Farmington Area Jaycees sold out of Bomb Pops, a Popsicle, early in the afternoon, but continued to do brisk business selling pop, hot dogs and chips. Ken Bills, chairman, said they expected to sell 41 cases of the cold drink by the end of the day, and 1,500 hot dogs.

"It's definitely better than last year because of the weather. Last year, there was a brief shower



Patrick Murphy (left) and his brother, Michael, racing on the Big Wheels track. Michael is getting a push from Wendy Zeich, who works for the Farmington Hills Parks & Recreation Fun Center.

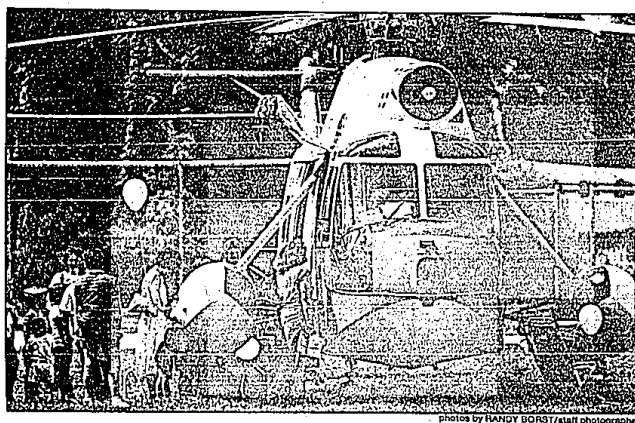
around 4 or 5 p.m. which dissipated the crowds rather quickly. This year, there is not a cloud in the sky, well, maybe one or two. This will definitely be one of our most successful projects," Bill said.

FARMINGTON ROTARY Club members, who participated for the first year, found their pizza and pop to be in demand — they ran out of pop twice. Twenty-five pizzas, totaling 450 slices, were sold by mid-afternoon.

"We're just so happy to be involved and we make a little profit that we'll be able to donate to charity," said Bob Gardner, president.

Those groups will also have concession stands at the Founders Festival.

The showmobile, which featured different events and shows each hour, was also popular. Shows began with Professor Bloono the Clown, who made and gave away balloon-shaped animals throughout the day. They continued with the Brighton High Mime Ensemble, a pet show, demonstrations of martial arts by Ballard's Martial Arts, dancing by members of the Betty Johnston



A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter landed in the park and quickly drew a crowd.

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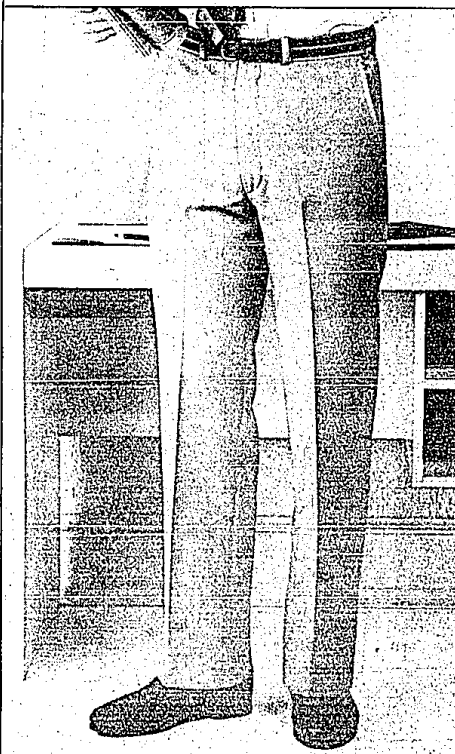


Julie Hardy (left) of Farmington Hills and her Golden Retriever, Taffador Appina. They competed in the Best Dressed category of the pet show. Julie tied for second place. The woman on the right is Julie's mom, Barbara. Julie is dressed like the Statue of Liberty.



Youngsters took particular delight with this large South American toad, belonging to Life Sciences at Kids Day.

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