



STAFF PHOTOS BY STEPHEN CASTRELL

Dental pals: Bloomfield Township dentist Dr. Ronald Fontanesi talks about good dental health with a group of preschoolers from Adat Shalom in Farmington Hills. The open house is designed to ease kids' fears of going to the dentist and teach good dental hygiene.



Brushing up: Iiana Goldman practices the correct way to brush teeth with the help of a cuddly dinosaur. Maybe if the dinosaurs had taken better care of their teeth they wouldn't be extinct.

Dentist drills kids on the art of dentistry

By GREG KOWALSKI
STAFF WRITER

To most people going to the dentist is about as much fun as, well, going to the dentist. Bloomfield Township dentist Dr. Ronald Fontanesi is trying to shake the myth that dentists are purveyors of pain.

For the past several years he has invited area youngsters to visit his office where they can get a hands-on opportunity to see how dentists operate. And as February is Children's Dental Health Month, it seemed appropriate for Dr. Fontanesi to hold his latest open house.

Sixteen 3- and 4-year-olds from Adat Shalom in Farmington Hills recently visited the dentist, spending about an hour operating dental tools, taking turns riding in the dental chair and learning about good dental hygiene.

They saw a short film on good and bad snacks and filled cavities in ceramic teeth with clay. "People still have fears about going to the den-

tist. I was an apprehensive patient myself," said Fontanesi. Modern dental techniques and equipment have eliminated much of the pain that was common in most dental procedures in years past.

"This is a hands-on program so they will be more comfortable when they go to the dentist," Fontanesi said of his open house program.

An assistant proposed the idea of opening the office to the kids about seven years ago.

"I started with two nursery schools, and the word got out," Fontanesi said. Now numerous area schools take part in the program.

"I usually do it about once a week," said Fontanesi.

"I thought it was fabulous," said Linda Goldenberg, a teacher at Adat Shalom of the program. She and fellow teacher Shelley Fine took the kids to meet with the dentist.

"It gave the children a positive opinion of going to the dentist," she said. "They came away with a good attitude."



Scary sounds:
Preschoolers

(from left) Jonah Mandel, Edlyn Levine, Rachel Lebovic, Joshua Saginaw and Danielle Taubman listen to the screech of a power drill operated by office manager Joyce Wojtczak. They then compared the roar to a gentle sound of a dental drill.

19-year veteran named police officer of year

Chief William J. Dwyer of the Farmington Hills Police Department announced that officer William Duffey was the recipient of the VFW Post 2209 Police Officer of the Year Award.

Officer Duffey has been with the department since 1974 and is currently assigned to the patrol division. During his tenure with the department, he has been assigned to the Oakland County Narcotics Enforcement Team, the Southwest Oakland County Auto Theft Unit, and specialized Hills police units.

On March 13, 1992, Duffey, then assigned to the Southwest

Oakland County Auto Theft Unit, was responding to an armed robbery of the United Savings Bank, 33505 W. 14 Mile Road, Farmington Hills. He saw two people who matched the descriptions of those wanted for the armed robbery in a vehicle on Orchard Lake Road.

Duffey pursued the car, which was going at a high rate of speed, into Southfield and broadcast its movements on the police radio. With help from Southfield officers, Duffey apprehended the two and recovered the money taken in the robbery.

The actions reflected Duffey's professionalism, Dwyer said.



Officer William Duffey

Police officer praises drunken driving sentence

By TEDD SCHNEIDER
STAFF WRITER

A Northville man's stiff prison sentence for a double traffic fatality involving a Farmington Hills resident in July sends the right message about drinking and driving, a Livonia Police officer said Monday.

Philip Decou West was sentenced Feb. 1 by Wayne Circuit Judge John A. Murphy to 7-15 years in prison on two counts of second-degree murder for the July 14 accident on Schoolcraft near Eckles.

"I would hope this gets the point across. That's a long time to spend away for a couple of drinks," said officer Arthur Cheney of the Livonia Police traffic bureau.

West, 36, pleaded no contest to the charges, which carried a maximum life sentence.

A charge of felonious driving was dropped as part of a plea agreement with the Wayne County prosecutor. West was severely intoxicated

and fleeing at high speed from minor accidents in Livonia and Plymouth Township when his 1988 Oldsmobile collided head-on with a 1985 Buick driven by a Northville woman.

Killed in the crash were Keith Leja, 20, of Livonia and Kevin Payne, 23, of Farmington Hills, both passengers in the Buick.

A third passenger and both drivers were also injured.

West had a blood alcohol level of .31, three times the legal limit, at the time of the crash, police said.

His Oldsmobile was heading west on Five Mile about 8:30 p.m. when it sideswiped one car and then rear-ended a pickup truck at Haggerty and Schoolcraft in

Officer Arthur Cheney
Livonia Police traffic bureau

Plymouth Township a few moments later. Nobody was injured in those accidents.

West then made a left turn onto the wrong side of Schoolcraft and hit the Buick at about 70 mph, according to police reports.

Cheney said the sentence was the toughest for a Livonia fatality in several years.

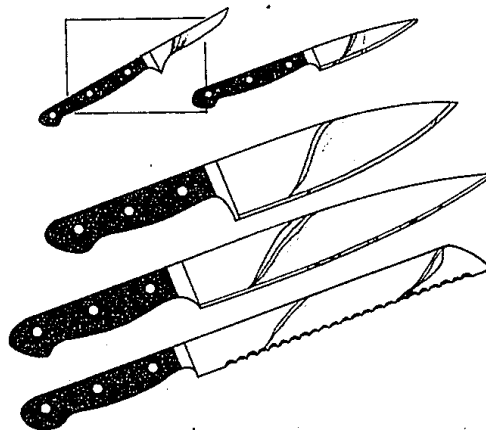
But the large families of the two victims and dozens of other relatives and friends have had their lives permanently altered by the incident, he said.

The Livonia officer praised Murphy and assistant prosecutor Kevin Simowaki for their handling of the case.

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