

# Petfinding services sniff out lost animals

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

**T**immy found Lassie, but that's only TV. Pets and owners parted are seldom reunited.

Last year, more than 9 million dogs and cats were reported missing nationwide. According to Michigan Humane Society executive director Gary Tiscornia, only 1 percent of cats are found by their owners; 10 percent of dogs are recovered.

The process is frustrating. "We just wait for the people to come in," said a woman at Oakland County Animal Control. "We fill out a lost report and try to match it up."

The old-trusted method of tags, which identify the animal by its registration through the city, is still a good one. Pets can turn up minus tags and collars, though.

"There's not too much we can do if they don't have any tags," said an employee at 1st Vet in Southfield.

New methods for finding lost pets continue to be developed, though.

A national lost and found pet hotline service has been established by the American Humane Society and Sprint. The system uses an 800/900 phone service.

People can call 1-800-755-8111 free of charge if they find a pet. If they lost one, they can ring 1-900-535-1515.

The cost for using the 900 service is \$1.95 per minute. Calls average four minutes.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture maintains a registry for pets with identification tattoos. A process whereby microchips are injected into an animal has also started.

"We support any activity to reunite animals with their owners," said Tiscornia, whose offices are in Rochester Hills. "... so precious few animals are reunited with their owners."

As a result, many lost pets are needlessly put to sleep.

George Farkas of Farmington Hills has come up with another idea. Farkas' Pet Link Network is a process whereby owners register their animal with a computer database.

A profile is done, which includes a detailed photo. If the pet is lost, Farkas faxes the information and photo to shelters, pounds and veterinarians around the state.

Cost for the initial registration is \$20 (annual renewal is \$10). When the animal is lost, a profile is electronically sent to 20 locations for an additional \$30.



Tongue on cheek: Pet-finder George Farkas gets a hiss from Tasha, a friend's dog who is signed up from the service.

Farkas said he can reach 800 shelters, pounds or vet offices statewide.

"Anyone who has the authority to euthanize an animal, I broadcast to," said Farkas, who also owns a pet care business, Tend-a-Pet. "If we can have an impact on a fraction of (lost pets), and save a fraction of those animals... that's a lot of animals."

Pet Link has only recently started business. So far, Farkas has a handful of pets registered, all of which are pedigree animals.

Farkas, though, believes the registry would be especially helpful to owners of mixed-breed dogs and cats since photos are easier to recognize than descriptions on an index card, he said.

Farkas has talked to several organizations about Pet Link.

"The one fear I have is that it might give a pet owner a sense of complacency," Tiscornia said. "They may feel they don't need to go to our shelter and look for their animal."

"Overall, though, I think it's a good idea."



Pet profile: George Farkas (left) holds Tasha, while Dr. Thomas Kavanaugh of Village Veterinary Clinic of Farmington looks over Tasha's profile.

# Woman, 70, hurt trying to get away from burglar

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

A 70-year-old Farmington woman was shaken after being assaulted during a burglary Thursday.

Farmington Public Safety Department responded to a call shortly after 10 p.m. on Frederick Street in the Warner Farms subdivision. The woman was left with a 1-inch cut on her nose after she was grabbed by an assailant when she ran to a neighbor's home. He began to drag her backwards when the woman cried for help. The man dropped her and fled through a back yard, possibly onto Manning Street. Her purse, which became twisted around on her shoulder during the struggle, broke her fall.

She was treated at Botsford Hospital and released.

The assailant is described as a small to medium framed black male with a medium complexion and short hair. He was wearing a dark, navy colored nylon jacket. "I think it was totally random," said Farmington Public Safety commander Charles Lee. "There's no reason this woman should have been selected. She was not a typical target."

Two rooms, including the bedroom, were ransacked. A small amount of Canadian money is believed to be missing.

The woman became suspicious when returned home and found a broken window in the rear of the house.

After running next door, she caught a glimpse of the assailant approaching her. He tried to put his hand around her mouth. During the attack, he was heard to say "Give me" and "I want."

The attacker was wearing gloves.

One resident on nearby Manning Street reported hearing a woman scream and went outside to investigate. Another person said her son heard someone running between her home and the victim's residence.

Police found foot prints in the back yard. It's not certain whether there was more than one person involved.

"We haven't had something like this (a burglary and an assault) in a long time," Lee said.

The last burglary in the Warner Farms subdivision occurred in May 1990. There's been two residential burglaries reported this year in Farmington.

A Neighborhood Watch alert has been put out by the department, asking for any information.

## POLICE/FIRE CALLS

Listed below are some of the Farmington area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week.

**FIRE**  
Farmington Hills firefighters from Station 3 put out a fire at a residence on Wildwood Trail May 4. A lighting fixture caught fire, starting a fire in the attic above the kitchen. Firefighters used a booster line to put out the fire, which caused \$20,000 in damage to the property and \$5,000 in damage to contents.

A 1981 Pontiac parked at Brookplace Court in Farmington Hills caught fire May 5 from gasoline in the engine compartment. The car, worth \$1,200, was a total loss and damaged the paint of a 1988 Ford Thunderbird and a 1977 Chevrolet. Damage to the Ford was \$2,500. There was \$500 damage to the Chevy.

**VANDALISM**  
The left rear window of a 1981 Chevy Malibu parked on Wiloughby between May 3-4 was smashed causing \$150 in damage. The driver's side window of a 1992 Toyota Camry was broken causing \$400 in damage while the car was parked at Botsford Hospital

on Grand River in Farmington Hills May 5.

A window at U.S.A. Transmission on Grand River in Farmington Hills was broken between May 4-5 causing \$600 in damage. A window was broken on a 1990 red Toyota Supra parked on Gateway in Farmington Hills on May 5 causing \$150 in damage.

The exterior of six 1993 cars at Sunshine Acura on Grand River in Farmington Hills were heavily scratched between May 4-5 causing \$1,000 in damage.

Consumer's Power reported damage totaling \$300 was caused when the glass plates and hands were broken.

**THEFTS**  
Golf clubs worth \$200, a radar detector worth \$300, cassette tapes worth \$250, and a rearview mirror worth \$50 were taken from a 1990 Chevy Cavalier parked at a residence on Doverhill in Farmington Hills between May 3-4. A car phone worth \$800 was stolen from a 1990 blue Pontiac 6000 parked at a pump at the Shell gas station on Middlebelt April 26 while the owner was inside paying for gas. A cassette stereo worth \$100, \$15 in cash and several cassette

tapes were stolen from a residence at the Greenhill Apartments on Greenhill in Farmington Hills between May 3-4.

Jewelry worth \$31,500 was stolen from an apartment at the Country Ridge Apartments on Country Ridge Circle in Farmington Hills between Dec. 16, 1992 and April 29, 1993. The items include a woman's diamond ring worth \$11,000, a woman's diamond ring worth \$10,500, a woman's ruby bracelet worth \$6,000 and a woman's diamond bracelet worth \$4,000.

A \$380 calculator that had been stolen between April 30 and May 5 from Amazing Savings on Orchard Lake in Farmington Hills was recovered near a Dumpster behind the building on May 5.

Items valued at \$6,153 including two color TVs worth \$600, a VCR worth \$325, jewelry worth \$1,500 and watches worth \$1,350 were stolen from a residence on Nova Valley in Farmington Hills on May 5. A \$3,000 woman's bracelet, \$400 in cash and \$29 in stamps were stolen from Dea's Crossing Condos on Martel Drive in Farmington Hills between March 17 and April 19.

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