

Ben there, done that: Marks named Jaycees' top volunteer

BY LARRY O'CONNOR

STAFF WRITER

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The county's top cop and an area civic leader are in step on one issue: Volunteers make a difference.

New Oakland County Sheriff

Michael Bouchard pinch hit as keynote speaker at the 32nd Annual Farmington Area Jaycees Community Leadership Prayer Breakfast Wednesday. Scheduled guest speaker, Kelly Garver Nieto, motivational speaker and Miss Michigan runner-up, couldn't attend.

"Those are pretty big pumps to fill on my behalf," Bouchard joked.

Farmington Jaycees honored Longacre House Executive Director Ben Marks as its top volunteer during the event at Glen Oaks Country Club.

Marks is credited for raising \$250,000 for the Longacre House, which was built in 1869 and served as a stop on the underground railroad. The community activity center was in financial straits until Marks arrived.

"This jewel would have been lost if it were not for Ben Marks' tireless efforts," said June Farrell, Farmington Jaycees president.

Marks, whose community service spans municipal and private circles, put on his humble side.

"So many in this community do as much and some people do even more. I was thinking, 'Why me?'" said Marks, noting his ego is rather large. "I didn't dwell on the 'why me?' too much, though."

After laughs faded, Marks seriously pointed out he's only one of a multitude who help in the community.

"You don't do it for the recognition. You do it for the number one attribute: You want to ... to help your community."

Bouchard, who succeeded the late John Nichols as Oakland County Sheriff in January, reiterated volunteerism's value. He



Rise, shine and speak: Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard delivers the keynote address during the 32nd Annual Farmington Area Jaycees Community Leadership Prayer Breakfast at the Glen Oaks Country Club in Farmington Hills.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BREWER

Top Marks: Longacre House Executive Director Ben Marks Wednesday morning was honored as the Farmington Jaycees' top volunteer.

served as state senator and was a 12-year police veteran on the Bloomfield Township department.

Bouchard cited Warren Harding, John Kennedy and de Tocqueville in stating the importance of giving back to the community. He also noted in places like Farmington and Farmington

Hills that volunteerism is passed down through families.

Such concern is one way to get parents and kids talking, which is one step in helping prevent tragedies like those in Colorado. As county sheriff, Bouchard has been busy answering questions on the best responses.

"I don't think the focus should

necessarily be on our SWAT capability or what type of entry we'd make in an explosive situation," Bouchard said. "We are better served by seeing how those situations don't develop and being more attuned to the warning signs."

Her pizza box design wins contest

BY TIM SMITH
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William Grace Elementary School fourth-grader Anne Madelaine Roxas' idea topped area competition to create the next design for Papa Romano's "Little Bambino" pizza boxes.

Anne Madelaine drew pizza slices with "happy faces" made out of various toppings.

"Each little piece of pizza had a face created by a particular topping," such as vegetables or pepperoni, said her teacher, Denise Gundl-White.

Entries were submitted by students from around the Farmington district.

"Papa Romano's approached a couple of schools in the area to do this," Gundl-White said. "... I think it's a wonderful opportunity for the kids to show their creativity in a way

that's going to impact something outside the school."

Gundl-White and Anne Madelaine went through a lot of rough drafts and revisions before perfecting her pizza art concept. "It's neat how Anne (Madelaine) took the time to really think about her product."

Anne Madelaine received a \$100 U.S. savings bond and a Papa Romano's pizza party for her class, featuring an appearance by the Little Bambino.

Other William Grace school finalists for the pizza design honor were: Rachel Dubiel, Ashley Harwood, Asia Hassan, Nadine Lopez, Kristie Luark, Anthony Mouawad, Chris Pyant, Colin Warren, Corey Wilson and Melanie Witz.

Papa Romano's pizza is at 35488 Grand River in Farmington.

AGENDAS

Farmington City Council
City Hall, 474-5500
8 p.m. Monday, May 3

Farmington School Board:
32500 Shiawassee
7:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 4
469-3300

Agenda items include:

■ Petitions: Letter from Sue Casey, president, Sunny Day Care and Montessori, 33200 Slocum St., requesting temporary signage.

■ Approval of public hearing notices for proposed 1999-2000 budget and property tax rate.

■ Presentation of RRRASOC 1998-2000 budget.

■ Quarterly reports: public works, water and sewer, building departments.

■ Consideration to enter into executive session to consider purchase of real property.

Agenda items include:

■ Evidence of Excellence: Dunckel Middle School Battle of the Books team; Power Middle School Odyssey of the Mind team; Harrison High School RoboHawks; Partnership Wall of Fame honorees; Galileo update.

■ Acceptance of 1999 graduation list.

■ Review of open/closed campus study committee report and recommendations.

■ Award of district-wide security system bid.

■ Report from curriculum committee.

■ William Grace student Anne Madelaine Roxas (above) did a few rough drafts before perfecting her pizza art concept.

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