

Zoo revue is animal schmooze

Event puts wrap on summer



Whoa a minute: A miniature horse takes a break during the petting zoo in downtown Farmington Aug. 4.



A horse of course: Jenny Jacob and her mom Deborah take a close look at a miniature horse, Jessie Walsh, at left, likes him, too.



A divine bovine: If Allison Schenk and Tommy Fournier stretch just far enough, they can pet a calf.

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
STAFF WRITER

The miniature horse was undoubtedly the star of the show when a mobile petting farm came to downtown Farmington Wednesday afternoon.

An informal poll of children attending the event showed the miniature horses, which resembled a pony, the unofficial favorite out of the bunch. Coming in a distant second was the rabbit, which sat on a petting farm worker's lap getting lots of attention from the youngsters.

Many children mistook the horse for a pony. "I like the pony," said Jessi Walsh, 6, of Farmington Hills. "I like to ride them and the baby ones are so cute."

Jessi's mother, Theresa, said they have been impressed with the Downtowns Development Authority's Summer Fun Series, of which the petting farm was a part.

"We come to all of these summer programs," she said. "It's just good summer fun."

Other horse fans were Chelsea Swanson, 5, of Canton, who called it a "horse" and Hannah Cousino, 6, of Redford.

But Chelsea's younger sister, Alyssa, 2, said the cows were her favorite.

South Lyon-based Carousel Acres, which brings petting farm animals to birthday parties, community events and day care

centers, presented the event. Carousel Acres also offers "pony parties," a particular hit with little girls. Included were two calves, two baby goats, a burro, a miniature horse, a rabbit and two sheep.

Carousel Acres worker Suzy Groat said the animals have been around people their whole lives and seem to like children. The feeling is mutual.

"The kids get so happy," Groat said. "They get to pet different animals and learn their different

names." She said the miniature horse is always a hit, but most animals have their fans.

"The sheep aren't that popular," she said. The spotlight on the miniature horse quickly shifted over to Groat's lap, where she held a domesticated rabbit for the children to pet.

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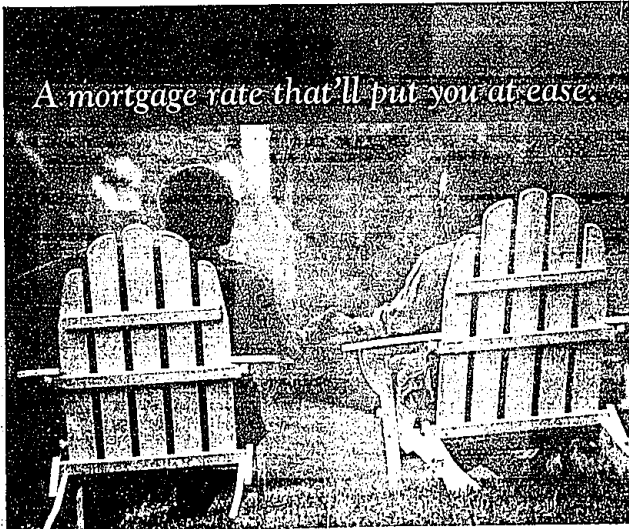
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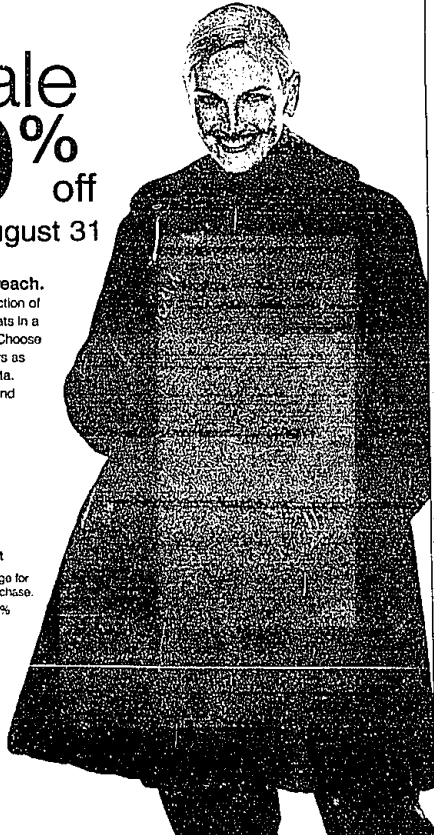
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