

Waddling down Woodward

■ Birmingham parade will raise money to save basset hounds

By KAREN WORKMAN
Of The Oakland Press

Between 400 and 500 basset hounds will take to the streets of Birmingham on Sunday, May 16, waddling their way to raise money that will save more of their own kind.

"This whole waddle idea has literally saved thousands and thousands of basset hounds," said Melissa Fenchel of Waterford Township, the president of Michigan Basset Rescue.

This year will be the 15th year that the Basset Waddle will take part in the Celebrate Birmingham Parade.

The story of the Basset Waddle goes back to when Fenchel's previous dogs, Old English Sheepdogs, were getting old in age.

"I think there's a basset bond here that some people have, because I was just drawn to them," Fenchel said. "Whenever I happened to see one in public, I'd kind of freak out and say, 'Can I pet your dog? He's so wonderful.'"

When her sheepdogs died, Fenchel said she was ready to make the switch. "Bassets aren't small dogs, they're pretty big dogs on short legs," Fenchel said.

Years later, Fenchel started the basset rescue thinking she would take in a couple dogs a month, rehabilitate them and find them permanent homes.

While the rescue group was still in its first year, Fenchel's mother suggested they take part in the Celebrate Birmingham Parade as a way to get some exposure.

Got a basset?

The Michigan Basset Rescue is hosting a picnic in Waterford Township for basset hounds and their owners on Saturday, May 15. The Basset Waddle is part of the Celebrate Birmingham Parade, which begins at 1 p.m. Sunday, May 16, on North Old Woodward near Booth Park. More information on the events is online at michiganbassetrescue.org.



The Oakland Press/TIM THOMPSON

Melissa Fenchel, president of Michigan Basset Rescue, left, and Marsha Haines take their basset hounds for a run at the Orion Oaks Dog Park in Orion Township. The two are getting ready for the upcoming Basset Waddle in Birmingham.

The bassets turned out to be popular with the crowd, the media and especially other basset owners.

The Basset Waddle was born, along with the idea to have people pledge money for each block their basset successfully waddled through.

"One year, we got featured in LIFE Magazine and that's when it really grew," Fenchel said. "It was completely insane, our phone was ringing off the hook."

Basset owners now travel from all across the nation to take part in the Basset Waddle.

In addition to that, Fenchel has advised other basset rescues from New Mexico, New Jersey, Illinois, California, Texas and more on how to set up similar waddles in their communities.

"And people will bring their dogs out just to watch the bassets," Fenchel said. "We'll look along the sidelines and every breed, size and shape of dog you can think of will be sitting here."

Fenchel said the event is critical to supporting the rescue and its veterinary bills. She hopes to raise \$50,000 this year.

"And it doesn't take long to go through \$50,000," Fenchel said.

For instance, a dog named Sophie recently came to the group covered in ticks and heartworm positive.

"Her vet bill will total about \$1,000," Fenchel said. "Our vet bills average between \$2,000 and \$3,000 a month."

The group now takes in five or six dogs a week, placing all of them in foster homes until an adoptive family is found.

"It's amazing, still. When I first started rescuing bassets, I thought it would be one or two a month," said Fenchel. "We never dreamed it would be anything like this."

Contact staff writer Karen Workman at 248-745-4643 or karen@oakpress.com. You can also find her on Facebook and @KarenWorkman on Twitter.

TODAY'S MEETINGS

- Bloomfield Hills Schools Board of Education, 7 p.m.
- Huron Valley Board of Education, 7 p.m.
- Novi Community Schools Board of Education, 7 p.m.
- Pontiac City Council, 6 p.m.
- Walled Lake Board of Education, 7:30 p.m.

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AROUND OAKLAND

TROY

Marine radar seminar slated

A community marine radar seminar will be at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, May 8 at the West Marine, 789 E. Big Beaver Road. The cost is \$40; call 248-224-7235 or visit www.birminghampowersquadron.org.

WEST BLOOMFIELD TWP.

Lecture to focus on 'sexting'

West Bloomfield Youth Assistance and the Greater West Bloomfield Community Coalition will host a presentation by the Oakland County Prosecutor Jessica Cooper at 7 p.m. today at Abbott Middle School and at the Orchard Lake Middle School. Cooper will discuss computer crimes. Call 248-392-1278.

ROYAL OAK

Event will benefit HAVEN

Promenade of Hope, featuring cocktails, a strolling dimer, silent and live auctions and entertainment to benefit HAVEN will be at 6:30 p.m. today at Red Run Golf Club, 2036 Rochester Road. Tickets are \$150, available at 248-322-3703. Visit www.promenadeofhope.org. — Special writer Katie Boninon

FARMINGTON HILLS

Ice show in town

The Farmington Hills Ice Arena's 14th annual ice skating show, "Book on Down the Ice" will be at 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 7, and 4 p.m. Saturday, May 8. Tickets are \$8 for adults 19 and older, and \$6 for senior citizens and children ages 6-8. Children 5 and under get in free. Purchase tickets at the Farmington Hills Costick Center or Ice Arena. Call (248) 478-8880 for more information.

FARMINGTON

Ice cream social on tap

The historic Longacre House in Farmington will host a Family Game Night and Ice Cream Social 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday, May 21. Enjoy ice cream, toss horseshoes, play ping pong, bocce and other games. Cost is \$5 per person, with children 3 and younger free. Call (248) 477-8404 for more information.

CORRECTION

It is the policy of The Oakland Press to correct or clarify stories. We urge readers to call the news desk at 248-745-4632 if they have personal knowledge of errors.



Haircut for a cause

Andrew Gupta, 23, of Bloomfield Hills, was among 50 Wayne State University School of Medicine and pre-med students who volunteered to have their heads shaved to raise money for Camp Casey, a nonprofit horseback riding and outreach program in Birmingham. The students' goal is to raise \$3,000 to plan and pay for Camp Casey's "Cowboy Camp Outs" — overnight mini-vacations at dude ranch resorts for children battling cancer and their families. The students hold the event in the month before their United States Medical Licensing Exam Step 1 board exam. The head shaving is a tribute to the inner strength and determination of cancer patients who undergo such complications as losing their hair during chemotherapy. — Staff writer Diana Dillaber Murray

First Brag About Bloomfield contest winners announced

Four local children will enjoy prizes based on their entries in the Brag About Bloomfield video contest,

sponsored by Bloomfield Hills Schools, Bloomfield Township,

the City of Bloomfield Hills and the Bloomfield Township Public Library.

Brayden Smith, 5, and his family will visit the Bloomfield Township Central Fire Station for a fire truck ride and dinner prepared by firefighters. Brayden charmed more than 300 YouTube viewers with his rendition of the Black Eyed Peas' "I Gotta Feeling."

Brayden will be a kindergarten at Way Elementary in the fall.

Elena Hirsch, a sec-

On the web

Links to the Brag About Bloomfield video contest-video entries are posted on YouTube and on www.BloomfieldLiving.org.

ond-grader at Lone Pine Elementary will enjoy her next birthday with 11 friends at the Bowers Farm.

She won a birthday party with games and a wagon ride based on her YouTube video, where she dressed as a medical professional and prescribed great things for children living in the Bloomfields.

Hannah and Parker Goby, fourth- and third-graders respectively at Eastover Elementary, won a celebrity impersonation voicemail recording for their home

telephone, courtesy of former Dick Puritan show announcer Alan Muskovitz, aka Big Al. Hannah and Parker described the various ways that living in the Bloomfields is great.

Links to the video entries, which are posted on YouTube, are on www.BloomfieldLiving.org.

The Brag About Bloomfield contest is part of a larger collaborative effort between the four entities, called Bloomfield Living: A Brilliant Move, which is designed to encourage home shoppers to consider the area. With outstanding neighborhood amenities and exceptional home values, and tax incentives to purchase a first home, there's rarely been a better time for families to consider moving to the Bloomfields. — For The Oakland Press

TROY POLICE BLOTTER

Laptop stolen from locked office

A laptop computer was stolen recently from a locked office at Cotmac Electronics, 830 Kirks Boulevard. There were no signs of forced entry to the office. The incident occurred sometime between 4:30 p.m. Friday and 10:20 a.m. Tuesday.

Wheel covers stolen

Two wheel covers were stolen from a 1993 Chrysler New Yorker as it was parked in a driveway on Birch Run Drive. The theft took place sometime between 8 p.m. Friday and noon Saturday.

Windows shattered; navigation systems stolen from Suburban Cadillac dealership

In-dash navigation systems were taken from two 2010 Cadillac Escalades as they were parked in a parking lot at Suburban Cadillac, 1810 Mapledawn Drive.

Windows were shattered on both vehicles during the thefts, which took place sometime between 10 p.m. Thursday and 6 a.m. Friday. — Staff writer Dave Phillips

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