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DuPage County was the first in Illinois to start the VINE system, which is now available nationwide. Victims still can call toll free at (866) 566-8439.

**For children's sake:** The DuPage County Marine Corps League will host its annual "Christmas in June" Toys for Tots charity car show from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. June 5 at the Carol Stream Village Town Center, at Gary Avenue and Lies Road.

Registration will be from 9 a.m. to noon. Trophies will be awarded at 2 p.m. Entry fee for

cars and motorcycles is \$10 plus an unwrapped toy. The event will include raffles, cash prizes, and military and law enforcement auto displays.

Admission is free, but everyone should bring a new, unwrapped toy. The event is co-sponsored by Vintage Cars and Rods.

For details, call Roy at (630) 858-4053 or Harry at (630) 773-8722 after 6 p.m. In case of rain, the event will be held June 12.

**Award winners:** Two DuPage County college students have

been awarded \$500 scholarships from the Illinois Sheriffs' Association for the upcoming school year.

The winners are Michael Barenbrugge, 18, of Glen Ellyn, who attends Glenbard West High School, and Erica Skibbie, 19, of Villa Park, who is enrolled at Elmhurst College.

The students were recognized for their outstanding scholastic, extra-curricular and character qualifications.

Each year, the Illinois Sheriff's Association offers the scholarships to high-achieving

students who are pursuing a higher education.

"This ISA scholarship program is a meaningful expression of law enforcement's confidence in and respect for education and training," Sheriff Zaruba said. "I congratulate both Michael and Erica on their scholastic achievements and wish them the best of luck in the future."

**The quote:** "It doesn't bring our son back," said Carol Vasich, whose 23 year-old son, Gregory, was killed in an April 9, 2004, car

crash, "but we're grateful for the community's sake that (the driver) is not on the street anymore."

The motorist, Mark Schoger, 42, of Montgomery, faces up to 28 years in prison after being convicted last week of reckless homicide, aggravated DUI, and fleeing the fatal crash. He'll be sentenced later this year.

• *Christy Gutowski covers legal affairs for the Daily Herald. She welcomes your comments at (630) 955-3537 or e-mail at [cgutowski@dailyherald.com](mailto:cgutowski@dailyherald.com).*

## A true rat pack



Lee Ann Micheletti, vice president of the Northern Illinois Rat Organization, critiques Sir Suave, a Russian blue rat, during the Fancy Rat Show earlier this month. The event, which attracted 100 people and 47 rats, was the group's first.



Wagga Wagga, a black Berkshire rat, gets a manicure from owner Debbie Fratini before judging at the Fancy Rat Show at DuPage County Fairgrounds. Fratini is secretary of the Northern Illinois Rat Organization.

Naperville resident Ryan Dart, 5, greets Lightning Ridge, a champagne down-under dumbo and Moody, a hooded rex dumbo.



Ten-year-old Cameron Dart of Naperville cuddles Moody, a hooded rex dumbo, during the Fancy Rat Show in Wheaton.

## Rat expert teaches rodents some new tricks at show

By CATHERINE EDMAN  
Daily Herald Staff Writer

You just haven't seen anything until you've observed a pet rat wearing a grass skirt and a pink lei.

That humorous moment was among the highlights of the first show held by the Northern Illinois Rat Organization.

California pet rat expert Debbie Ducommun told

fanciers of the small mammals secrets of training them to do fun and unusual tricks during her portion of the event geared toward providing information to the uninitiated.

"We want to get them started on the right foot," club president Claudia Nix said.

For the more experienced, a total of 47 rats entered judging in the first-time show at the DuPage County Fairgrounds in Wheaton.

## Shop: Listener says she has saved thousands

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"When I'm driving around, I turn on the radio and keep it on 1280 because you just never know what special they are having."

McDowell has been radio shopping weekly for more than three years and claims to have saved thousands. Last year, she bought all-inclusive accommo-

dations in Jamaica for three people at a four-star resort and paid just \$899, she said.

Listeners also can check out the radio station's Web site — [www.wbig1280.com](http://www.wbig1280.com) — for a list of what's available.

The prices listed on the Web are retail. For example, a night's stay at a resort might be listed at \$119, but it could cost the caller only \$49 per night. The

Web site is updated weekly. The radio station has been hosting the show for more than 20 years. It started with about 100 participating businesses

and a few thousand registered callers.

Those who wish to shop on the show must register at its Web site. Registration is free.

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PHOTOS BY MARCELLE BRIGHT/DAILY HERALD  
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LaVerne McDowell, fan of WBIG-AM 1280's Radio Shopping Show

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The Daily Herald reaches 750,000 readers each day.

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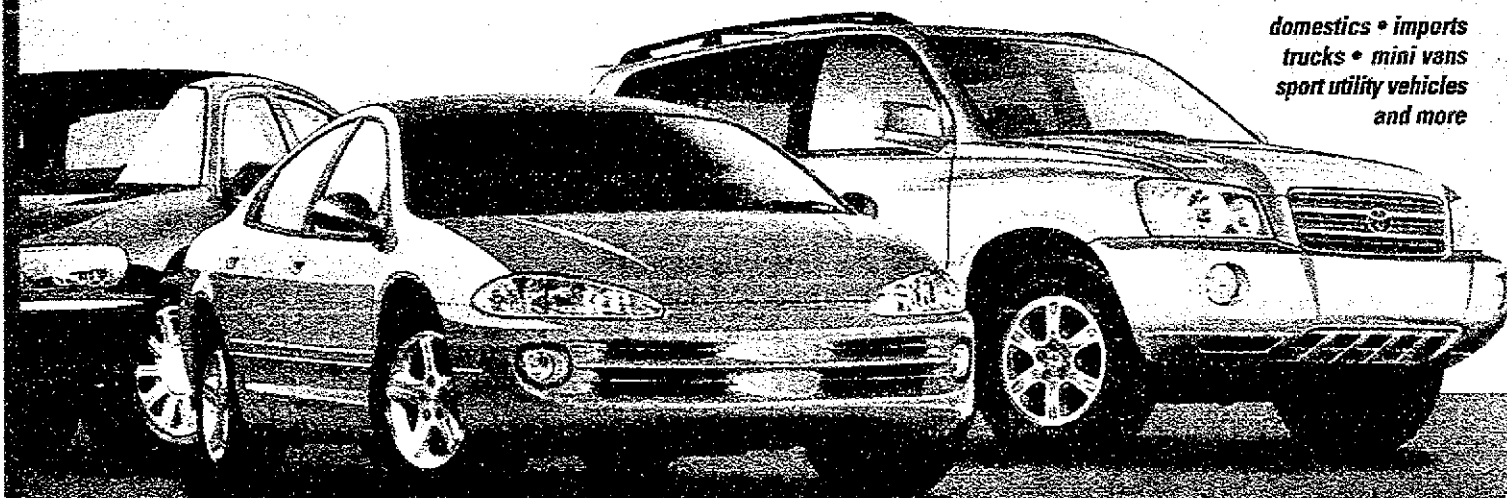
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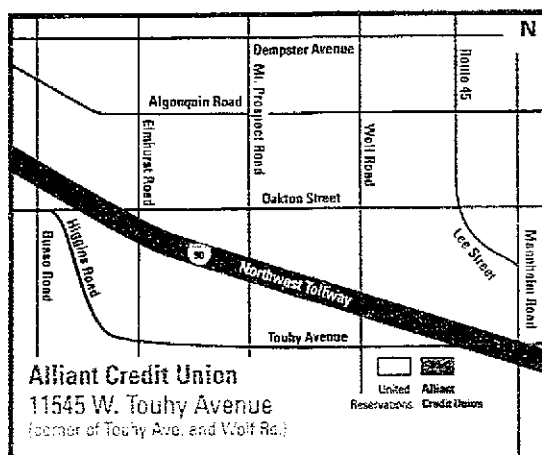
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