

## 'She would have died if it wasn't for them'

### Round Lake presents Medal of Valor to four retention pond rescuers

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By **DAN MORAN** DMORAN@SCN1.COM

ROUND LAKE -- For the first time in village history, medals of valor were awarded Monday to a quartet of first-responders who rescued a woman last October from a situation that could have cost them their own lives.

"I was the fifth guy there, and I can tell you they struggled," said Deputy Police Chief Francis Foy of the Oct. 24 incident, in which two police officers, a firefighter and an off-duty sheriff's deputy swam out into a retention pond to save a woman who had driven her car into the water 70 feet from shore.

"Right as they pulled her out, the car went under. It was amazing," Foy added. "(The Medal of Valor) has never been given out by our department, but we have no doubt she would have died if it wasn't for them."

The early afternoon accident happened in the Madrona Village subdivision off Route 120 and Wildspring Road. The motorist, a woman in her 30s, apparently missed a turn on westbound Concord Drive and drove her Chevrolet Cavalier into the pond, which is about eight feet deep at its center.

In a brief ceremony at the start of the Village Board meeting, the red, white and blue medals and certificates were given to Police Chief Cliff Metaxa, Officer Kraig Kapusinski, Round Lake Fire Protection District Firefighter Jay Vande Berg and Lake County Sheriff's Deputy Stephen Hennelly.

The certificate praised each man for "exceptionally valorous service given in the act of saving the life of another," added that each recipient "risked his personal safety and well-being to help save the motorist from imminent drowning."

Immediately following the ceremony -- which drew an overflow crowd of family, police and firefighters to Village Hall -- Metaxa and village officials swore in two new police officers, Nicole O'Brien and Leonard Walker Jr.

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