

New wild animals, such as Bambi, a six-day-old raccoon, are welcomed into the Cornell household by Bristol, one of the family's many domestic pets. Bambi will live there through the summer, then be released into the wild.



SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer

Animal activist

Hills woman upset by new DNR rule

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animal would have to be killed if a pest-control firm were called.

"We don't feel it's appropriate or economical in that three-county area to transport an animal 40, 50, 60 miles and then not know whether it's going to survive, suffer a lingering death or show up on someone else's doorstep," said Herb Burns, director of the DNR's law enforcement division.

BUT BAMBI smuggled safe and comfortable in his foster mother's arms last week, where Cornell's care and his voracious appetite had boosted his weight to 3½ ounces. She feeds him a bottle of puppy supplement with non-iron baby vitamins, a bit of baby pears for taste and "at night I add baby cere-

al so he'll sleep through the night — and it works."

Cornell has held her DNR license for the past six years, and has taken in raccoons, rabbits, squirrels, ducks, an untold number of birds and even had a lame Canada goose last year. The three raccoons she raised last year — Larry, Curley and Moe — were released on a friend's property, and she was told just the other day they had survived the winter.

Never has she taken in an animal as young as Bambi. "He bonded with me in two days," she said. "He knows my name — when I go near the cage he knows."

During the next few weeks, Bambi will travel with the family because of the constant feedings.

He attended an Easter dinner and plans included taking him to a wedding over the past weekend. Bambi stays in a small animal carrier, zipped into a quilted blanket and lies on a heating pad wrapped in layers of toweling to prevent burning.

"We just unplug him and take him along," she said.

The summer will be spent teaching him how to do things to survive when he is eventually released to his real home, like how to fish and worm in the back yard.

Cornell has called area vets, seeking a mate for Bambi so the duo can be raised and released together, in the wild.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

Cuts could endanger city's downtown plan

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Assistant city manager Robert Schultz, who attended a February Informational meeting on the possible TIF impact. "That is not highly probable."

Nonetheless, officials are watching Lansing with a wary eye and have joined with some 200 other communities across the state to make known their plight, should their funding be cut.

Farmington DDA director Wendy Strip-Sittsamer has put city officials and the DDA board on notice that change might be coming, but said she has few details at this point except that a package of tax reform bills is being considered.

Commonly known as TIF or TIFA, tax increment financing captures increasing property values in a set geographic district over a specific number of years. Groups using this financing method include downtown development authorities, tax increment financing authorities or local development finance authorities.

FARMINGTON'S DDA is in the midst of a \$1.5 million downtown redevelopment project, using tax increment financing to fund the project for seven years starting in 1986 and running through December of 1993. The first five years, TIF money is being spent to do the physical work; the two final years of TIF money would pay back a \$40,000 loan from the city for which the DDA is currently paying interest.

'It could be in jeopardy. At this stage, I don't know.'

— Wendy Strip-Sittsamer

The taxing district includes much of the city's central business district, where improvements such as new sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, new trees and a marketing program are underway thanks to TIF money.

Farmington's project is now more than halfway complete — into its fourth phase — but tax reform could leave the remainder of it in limbo if the ability to dip into increased SEV is halted. "It could be in jeopardy. At this stage, I don't know," Strip-Sittsamer said. "I think we're fortunate in that we have done the bulk of our project."

Farmington has joined a "round table" of 200 communities which have begun lobbying hard in Lansing to keep the financing vehicle for their projects alive.

"We're terrified," said Mary McKay, director of tax increment financing for the city of Taylor, which is spearheading the drive. Taylor has six TIFAs and an LDF in place and has done a myriad of infrastructure improvements during the past decade using tax increment financing.

TIFs are "a very workable situation for us and very good for our people," she added. "They've allowed us to do a lot of work the county doesn't have the money for."

McKay said her city got involved after initially told by state legislators that "they were not out to get TIFAs," then hearing about the introduction of four Senate bills "subsequently devastating every program funded by TIFAs."

"We're going to educate our legislators," she added. "Without them (TIFs) our communities will not be able to survive."

The group has hired a full-time lobbyist to plead their cause in Lansing.

Michigan DDA directors have formed another group to show state legislators just what has been accomplished in downtowns across the state, Strip-Sittsamer said.

The round table is taking its case to Lansing later this month, holding an informational meeting April 24 to which they will invite legislators, McKay added.



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Hunt on for oldest mother

It's not designed to be offensive... but there's a hunt on for the oldest mother in the 69th state House district.

That's the district, which includes Farmington and Farmington Hills, represented by Republican state Rep. Jan Dolan of Farmington Hills. Dolan and other legislators are looking for the oldest mothers in Michigan.

The search for Michigan mothers is part of a series of 11 annual statewide parades to celebrate the decade of the 1990s and to welcome the 21st Century. "Michigan Parades into the 21st Century" is the official name of the parades.

Nominations for the oldest moms should be sent to Dolan's Lansing office by April 15. "We would like people to nominate their mothers," said Nancy Bates, Dolan's legislative aide. "The objective is to look for the most senior mom to represent the 69th District."

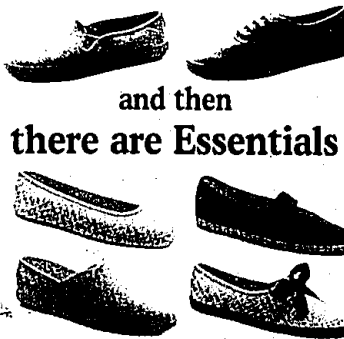
"A Salute to Michigan Mothers" parade Saturday, May 11, in Lansing, will come in the nick of time for Mother's Day. Nominations should be sent to Dolan at 165 State Capitol Building, Lansing 48193.

The theme of each of the 11 parades is to highlight organizations and business, for example, that had their beginnings during the particular decade. The 1990 parade featured items prior to 1910. The 1991 parade will feature the decade, 1910-1919.

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(USPS 187-840)
Published every Monday and Thursday by Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009-0910. Second-class postage paid at Birmingham, MI 48009-0910. Postmaster: Send address changes to Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham MI 48009-0910, Telephone 644-1100.
SUBSCRIPTION RATES
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One year \$36.40
(Elsewhere in Michigan)
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