

# Farmington Observer & Eccentric

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Fifteen Cents

## Hills bags it

### Recycling program isn't profitable

By JUDY OWEN

FARMINGTON HILLS—The department of public services (DPS) is recycling its last bundles of newspapers—at least for a while.

The seven-month-old program has been a steady money-loser for the city despite calls from environmentalists urging the recycling as a way to save timber.

The price paid by waste paper companies for the newsprint has dwindled to \$2 a ton—down from \$35 a ton 15 months ago, said Bob Shaw, DPS employee who oversees the refuse collection.

Plans call for scrapping the collection, at least temporarily, beginning June 1.

The city began its newspaper collection service on Oct. 1, 1974, on a pilot basis. Residents were urged to bundle the newspapers and place them out with trash for refuse collection.

THROUGH ITS contract with GCW Disposal Service, the city had requested that special racks be installed

on the trucks to separate the bundled papers from the rubbish.

The firm spent \$1,800 on the racks and paid the firm's employees a bonus each week as incentive for them to keep the papers separated.

But the logistics of the collection played havoc with any profit that might have been realized from the recycling.

THE PAPERS had to be transferred five times before they reached their final destination at the plant which purchased the newsprint.

The program operated in a deficit from the beginning, when it cost \$5 a ton.

To date, the program resulted in the collection of 140 tons of newsprint bringing \$491—far short of the break-even point.

News of the city's plans to drop the program came to light when Nancy Kourjian, head of Earth Alive environmental group, approached city officials about starting a string giveaway program.

RESIDENTS HAD first been told that placing the papers in brown paper bags would be a sufficient means of bundling.

However, the bags became torn in the many transfers the disposal company requested that string be used.

Ms. Kourjian came upon the idea of a string program to encourage residents to tie the newspapers in bundles.

She met with the city council in a budget planning study session and learned of the deficit nature of the program.

EARTH ALIVE was unable to provide enough money for the entire program, and she was seeking the city's participation.

The organization operates the successful glass recycling center behind the city offices.

There is a surplus of paper now. Ms. Kourjian said, and waste paper companies aren't anxious to buy any more for recycling.

Marketing incentives presently provide more money to move primary or

new materials than to move the secondary or recycled recycled materials, she said.

SHE SUPPORTS a solid waste disposal bill in Congress which would make funds available as incentives for recycling on a large scale.

It would provide technological and financial assistance as well as natural resource development for management techniques in this area, she said.

She added that she would like to see an equalization of freight rates which would make it just as easy to move the secondary materials as it is to transport the new materials.

One councilman suggested that Earth Alive use the surplus from its glass recycling program to support a paper collection.

"NOW THAT'S a switch," she said. "Paper used to subsidize the glass program."

She said she does not favor the glass subsidy.

## Farmington goes 'quackers' over flock of wild mallards

By CORINNE ABATT

FARMINGTON—The boss of the creek which runs north of Shawwassee between Farmington Road and Power is a large white three-year-old duck.

None of the pure-bred mallards, half breeds or wild visitors question that fact—when he moves they follow. When he quacks, they jump.

The great white boss owes all of his good fortune to the Maurice LaVerre family whose backyard slopes down to the creek, a part of the flowage system.

It was three years ago that Mary Ann brought home a duck egg she had found near the creek. When it hatched, it was a mallard, and LaVerre thought it would be nice to add several more to the area.

He found a pet store selling mallards and settled these with a couple of whites in his yard along the creek. For three years this group regularly hatched two to three batches of chicks. LaVerre kept the pure mallards and passed the others along to neighbors and friends.

LaVerre said he kept the pure

Mallards because, "I wanted to populate the creek with wild ducks."

THERE ARE always some chicks lost along the way. Occasionally, children would stone them. LaVerre knows people with guns have gone after the ducks, and other animals prey on them.

It is surprising to the family that since they have been encouraging the duck population, the wild life in general seems to be flourishing.

"This past year," said LaVerre, "we had more coons and more muskrats that ever before—great, big, beautiful muskrats started coming to the creek last year."

"I called the Detroit Zoo and they said the muskrat is not a predator to the duck. We know one skunk came along and ate the hen and the eggs in one nest. It didn't ever leave the bill."

That hen was one of the originals LaVerre bought from the pet store. All the LaVerres know and recognize the ducks.

"YOU WOULDN'T believe it," said LaVerre, "they're all different."

The ducks too, know who their friends are, who feeds and cares for them over the winter and what section of the creek is theirs.

"Our ducks pick a spot—that's their area—and no others better come into their area."

He explained that anyone who wants to help promote the duck population should be prepared to feed them in the winter and have some place for them to stay—a sort of bed and board deal in exchange for enjoyment and amusement.

"I have a pen for them, but I don't clip their wings," LaVerre said pointing to a fenced area and small shelter near the creeks.

THE LAVERES often go through 100 pounds of pet food a month feeding six to eight adults and an assortment of chicks.

Two or three new batches of chicks are expected later this month, plus a dozen in the LaVerre hatchery in the basement.

If even one egg in a nest is destroyed, the hen will not return to sit on the eggs, so the basement down are those left unattended. If the hen is interrupted and frustrated in her hatching several times, she will begin laying eggs anywhere and everywhere.

The LaVerre youngsters, Dave, Debbie and Donna, have found them on the lawn, in the flowers and around the creek. These are the ones they bring to their home hatchery.

LAVERE KEEPS close track of egg temperatures on a chart and checks the eggs periodically with a candle. The egg is placed over a small opening of a box which contains a light bulb.

The light from the bulb reveals the (See DUCKS, next page)



Taking time out

You can't expect two little girls to be that interested in baseball. Michelle Vogl and Nancy Pirnk, both of Farmington, were a little dismayed during a recent game at Farmington High School so they decided to play a little game of their own. The two girls decided they wanted to climb the fence behind the baseball diamond. Michelle made it to the top, but Nancy just watched. (Photo by Craig Newman)

## Hospital offers free pressure tests

Free tests to check for high blood pressure are scheduled in several area hospitals during May, designated as National Hospital Month. Bedford General Hospital in Farmington Hills, Martin Place Hospital West in northwest Detroit and Providence Hospital in Southfield all have announced programs to administer the tests. Providence also will offer a health education program at the Jet-Twelve Mall, the location for the tests.

Screening clinics are planned in Boisford, 29550 Grand River, on Wednesday and Friday, May 14 and 16, both days at 9:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. A hospital tour and refreshments will follow each clinic, and those planning to attend are asked to call the hospital's department of public relations.

The tests at Martin Place West, 19335 Schoolcraft, will be given

Tuesday and Thursday, May 20 and 22, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and Wednesday, May 21, from 3 to 9 p.m.

Those planning to participate are asked to limit food intake prior to the testing and to be prepared to give a brief family history.

The tests at Providence will be in conjunction with a display of the Southfield Life Support paramedics program. The exhibit runs 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday, May 12 to 17, and nurses will be available to administer blood tests from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and from 6 to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday.

Special lecture program topics will include high blood pressure, 7 p.m. Tuesday; emergency procedures, 7 p.m. Thursday; breast cancer, 11 a.m. Saturday and alcoholism, 1 p.m. Saturday.



Maurice LaVerre and his son, Dave, feed two of the many ducks that now call the creek north of Shawwassee a permanent home. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

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### More life

To make the Suburban Life section more visible on Mondays, it has its own front. The Sons of Norway and the Walk for Farmington dominate this week's life section. See page 1-B. Sophomore Chris Kallgren led Farmington Harrison to a non-league victory Thursday. Ed Zarb batted in two runs to help the cause. For a complete baseball roundup, turn to page 1.