



Multi-faceted Karl Bailey, horticulturist, teacher, researcher, bird bander and world traveler, nervously awaits the ripening of his grapes. Bailey's farm and vineyard are situated in Bloomfield Township and Troy, along Adams Road north of Long Lake. (Staff photos by Stephen Cantrell)

It's a new harvest for Karl Bailey

By ALICE COLLINS

Karl Bailey doesn't believe he's a senior citizen. "Why should I?" he asked, ruffled because the subject was brought up.

His age — he was 84 last month — is almost irrelevant to his style of living, his enthusiasm for learning, teaching and laboring and his love of nature. "I don't want to quit, I look forward to each day," said Bailey, "just like I always have."

His primary focus this month, and next, are the grapes ripening on his vines that cover acres and acres of farm land off of Adams road just north of Long Lake.

It's a critical time for the grapes that must ripen and be sold before the first killing frost "brings the deal to an end" one morning in October.

"The average date for that first real frost in this region is Oct. 11," Bailey said last week as he was interviewed near his endless rows of manicured grapevines covered with protective netting. "The end can actually come anytime between Oct. 4 and Oct. 25," he said.

"UP UNTIL the recent rains, the high temperatures have made this an excellent summer for growing. But I'd

now be happy if the damn rains would stop."

"Right now, I feel nervous," he said. In the meantime, he's installed his grape hotline: 644-4706. Home winemakers waiting to buy Bailey's grapes call that number for a ripening report. He offers 17 varieties of French and American grapes for winemaking and for making jams, jellies and juice.

When the grapes are ripe, Bailey's customers will go to his landmark vineyard and pick their own. Bailey supplies picking shears and containers, and has a grape crusher for customers to use.

Bailey strives to do most of the vineyard work himself. "I find great pleasure in growing plants," he said. "Mrs. Bailey and I often go across the road (his farm home is in Bloomfield Township on the west side of Adams and his vineyard across the road in Troy) at sunset, sit in the car and watch the sun go down with this vast panorama of green."

BUT THE VINEYARD is only one facet of Bailey's life. When he finds time to relax, he reads. Although he's "been stuck on Agatha Christie for years," his current materials include a book on the Costa Rican environment, where he plans to work this winter after the grapes are gone. He's also into reading a history of presidential elections.

Bailey is a horticulturist, bird bander, consultant for growing grapes, researcher, lecturer, writer, bee keeper, farmer, dairy cattle specialist, specialist on land planning, a collector of natural history specimens for museums, world traveler, husband and father of two sons.

He's been a teacher, principal, county agricultural agent and district horticultural agent.

Although he says he is physically healthy, a condition he described as "rusty arteries" directs him to spend his winters in warmer climates. Most of his recent winters have been in South American countries.

IN COSTA RICA this year, Bailey will be working as an adjunct specialist for the Museum of Michigan State University. He'll be lecturing to graduate students studying natural history at a research center there. The center is a project of 20 American universities.

For 30 years, Bailey collected museum specimens from all over the world, tracking down animals like the tapir in Honduras, and the manatee, a 900- to 1,500-pound sea cow found off the coast of British Honduras.

Bailey spent the last four winters in El Salvador "but the revolution going on there has made the country untenable now," he said.

During the winter of 1978-79, he conducted a major bird project in San Salvador, El Salvador, catching and banding 700 scissor-tailed flycatchers in 30 nights.

"Before that," said Bailey, "bird banders in the United States had caught 872 in the last 28 years."

THE FLYCATCHERS are caught soon after sunset with a nylon mist net stretched between two poles. "This particular bird has very powerful eyesight," he said. "They fly up to the net and right over it."

"By observing night after night, I found that for a period of five minutes, just 11 minutes after sunset, the birds could see well enough to fly, but not well enough to see the net."

"Then whammo! They'd fly into the net. The most I got in one night was 50."

The net causes the bird to drop to the ground, but doesn't hurt it, said Bailey.

All of the birds he captured, he banded and released.

Anywhere in the world that they're recaptured or found dead, it will be reported to the U.S. Department of Interior record office, providing knowledge about the bird and its migratory habits.

LAST JULY, Bailey had a hernia operation. "I didn't let it slow me down one bit," he said. "I was back up on my tractor a few days later."

He reluctantly describes himself as a workaholic. "I don't like to say it, but I guess that's what I am."

Last week, while testing the ripeness of his grapes, caring for his apple or-

chards and vegetable garden, and publicizing his upcoming grape selling season, he extracted honey from his six colonies of bees. He sells the honey to a bakery in Royal Oak.

BAILEY SEPARATES his job years, from which he retired 20 years ago, into three parts. After his graduation from MSU, he taught vocational agriculture and was high school principal in Holly for 10 years.

For the next 20 years, he was Oakland County agricultural agent, working primarily with 4-H Clubs, dairy cattle and apple orchards.

During the next 10 years, he was a district horticultural specialist for 10 counties.

He bought the farm in Bloomfield Township in 1940, and later bought the acreage across Adams Road. For many years, he and his family ran a roadside vegetable stand on Adams.

He continues to serve as a wine-making consultant and has observed the practice of winemaking in most of the major wine areas of the world.

"It may sound a little corny," said Bailey last week, "but I always had a feeling for fruit crops. Now grapes are my life."



"I don't want to quit. I look forward to each day. Just like I always have" — Karl Bailey.

Hills posts agenda

FARMINGTON HILLS CITY COUNCIL
7:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 15

Approval of agenda. Announcements, questions and answers.

Hearings

Consideration of introduction of Zoning Map Ordinance C62-226. Section 33, lots 75 and 76 of Farmington Acres

MSU alumni elect veep

Forrest Strand of Farmington Hills has been elected to a three-year term on the board of directors of the Michigan State University College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Alumni Association.

Strand is vice president of the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce. He received a bachelor's degree in agriculture education in 1949 and a master's degree in adult education in 1953 from MSU.

Strand and fellow board members will host the college's alumni reunion Oct. 18 in Jensen Field House at MSU.

Subdivision, RA-3 to OS-2. Proponent: Paul Potti.

Consideration of introduction of Zoning Map Ordinance C62-227. Section 12 lots 40 and 41 of supervisor's plot of Woodcreek Farms, 30550 Northwestern Highway, RA-1 to OS-3. Proponent: Robert L. Ziegelman.

Consideration of introduction of Zoning Map Ordinance C62-228. Section 32 south side of Nine Mile Road, between Gill and Green Hill Road, from RA-1 and RA-3 to RP-2. Proponent: James M. Ginn and A.J. MacIsley Company.

Consideration of introduction of Zoning Map Ordinance C62-229. Section 33 south side of Nine Mile Road, between Gill and Drake Roads, RA-3 to RP-2. Proponent: Farmington Hills Planning Commission.

Unfinished Business

Consideration of off-site easement for sewer to serve the Old Homestead Subdivision.

New Business

Consideration of City Council referring zoning request 8-6-79 back to the Planning Commission for further study. (Twelve Mile and Halstead)

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