Wild goose on the mend thanks to rescue team

By Teri Banas
staff writer

Golfers near 13th green in the Whispering Willows Golf Course may have wondered what the flap was about Friday when they suddenly discovered themselves in the middle of a wild goose chase.

In fact, even the principals involved wondered just what they were getting themselves into when they were called out to rescue an injured traveler from a foreign country.

The police department's animal control officer, two fire department emergency medical technicians, a veteranarian and some officials onlookers went to the golf course to capture a Canada goose with an injured wing.

After a 15-minute rowboat chase around a 4-acre pond, Livonia's two rescue technicians captured the bird and he was placed in the hands of Dr. Elwood Collins, a Livonia veteranarian.

COLLINS said he would take the goose to Michigan State University's School of Veterinary Medicine where a team of wild life specialists was prepared to help the injured bird.

One of the rescuers, firefighter Richard Colomina, said of the chase: "It was a different kind of rescue, you could say that. When you're called out on a run, you never know what to expect."

"Anyone on the department would have done the same thing, given the team effort," added his partner, Paul Denapoli. "We're humanitarians just like anybody else.'

The goose apparently was on his way South when he picked out the golf course as a place to rest while on the mend.

The bird had stationed himself in the middle of an obstacle pond for the past two weeks. For the most part, he remained on a semi-submerged stump in the middle of the pond.

GOLF COURSE personnel contacted the Humane Society. Other interested parties called area nature centers but were unsuccessful in securing aid.

Several people concerned that the bird would fall prey to a hawk or, unable to fly south for the winter, would freeze to death this winter.

Finally someone called the city animal control officer.

Animal control officer Herman Pyrkosz, a 17-year veteran, soon realized this mission would require more than a noose or a net and he called for help.

Colomina and Denapoli, both certified emergency medical technicians, were on a hydrant-maintenance assignment when they got the call.

Using a small rowboat they had brought, Colomina and Denapoli rowed out to the middle of the pond. After a 15-minute chase, the bird scooted into a marshy wetland near the shore. The emergency medical technicians then captured the bird.

"ONLY WAY we could catch him without hurting him would be to get him on the fairway," said Pyrkosz, who once worked as a veterinarian's assistant for 10 years and had a useful knowledge of geese.

Pyrkosz said of the goose: "He's unusally large, probably five or six-years-old and he's smart as a whip."

He explained that geese are attracted to golf course and cemeteries, in particular, because of the short grass found there. The ducks feed on grass, seed or grain.

Collins examines the bird's broken wing as Pyrkosz gently holds it under his arm.

Donohue elected planning chief

John Donohue of Farmington Hills was recently elected president of the 2,100-member Michigan Society of Planning Officials. The results of the election were announced at the annual conference of the Society Oct. 7-9 at the Saginaw Civic Center.

Donohue was the first attorney elected to the Board of Directors two years ago and is the first to serve as president. He served the Society as its secretary-treasurer for the past year. Donohue represents several Southeastern Michigan communities on planning and zoning matters through his position with the law firm of Davidson, Gotshall, Kohl, Secrest, Wardle, Lynch and Clark of Farmington Hills.

The Michigan Society of Planning Officials is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to promoting community planning and to improving planning decisions.

Remington joins university staff

Peter G. Remington of Farmington Hills, director of development for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO), has been appointed vice president for univesity relations for the University of Detroit.

Remington will be responsible for the university's fund-raising, alumni relations and public relations operations.

Remington joined the DSO in 1980, where he was responsible for all fund-raising activities including government relations, the annual fund, special grants, endowment, planned giving and auxiliary activities. Under his direction, contribution income to the symphony more than doubled, while the volunteers fund-raising force grew from 50 members to more than 5,000 members.

Between 1974 and 1980, Remington directed several units of the United Foundation, most recently commercial, the foundation's second largest unit, which conducts Torch Drive activities in companies and industries totaling 160,000 employees.

A graduate of Western Michigan University with a bachelor's degree in political science, psychology and sociology, he worked in marketing and sales promotion capacities with two companies before entering the non-profit sector.

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