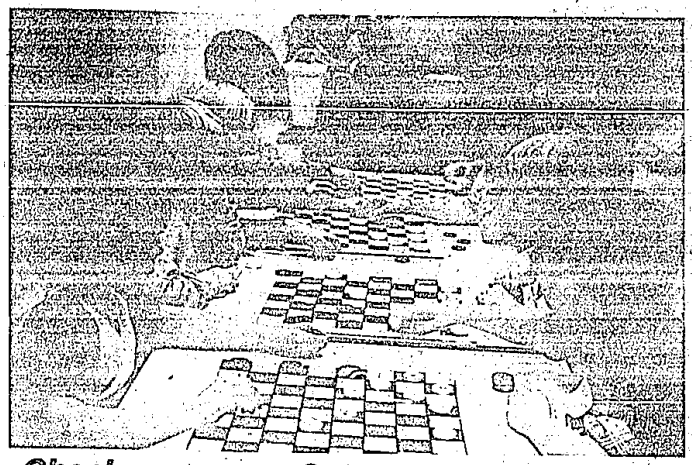

Checkers, anyone?

Kids will compete in two categories — 13 and under, and 14-17 — in Saturday's state Junior Checker Championships at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Metropolitan Detroit in the Adam H. Sarver center at 25507 W. Seven Mile, Redford Township. Admission is free. Registration begins at 9 a.m. Play starts at 10 a.m. and continues to 4:30 p.m. For registration information, call the Sarver building at 535-4855.

Spotting red-tailed hawks

By Timothy Nowicki
special writer

On my way to the Detroit Audobon Society sanctuary in St. Clair County, I travelled I-94 toward Port Huron. Along the way, I passed the time by searching the trees for hawks sitting and waiting for lunch.

The section of I-94 from the Walter Reuther (I-696) to Port Huron is the best section of freeway I've found so far for hawk watching. In February, another couple and my wife and I drove the same section on a Saturday morning on our way to Canada.

We all are avid hawk watchers, and among all four "hawk eyes" in the car, we counted 20 hawks in 42 miles — an average of one hawk every two miles.

AFTER A WEEKEND of cross-country skiing at the Pinery, north of Sarnia, and a fine stay at Bayfield Inn, we returned via the same route. This time, only one day later, we counted 29 hawks visible from the road — one every 1½ miles.

Most hawks we saw that weekend, and those seen around the Detroit area, are red-tailed hawks. They are large birds with a four-foot wingspan, have nearly white breasts and sit about 22 inches in a very upright position on their perches.

Red-tailed hawk

The "hawk eyes" in our car had learned to check the tops of telephone poles for "unusual" looking extensions, the dead snags of trees for stocky, white, upright "branches" and generally to look for an irregular shape in a tree.

I would recommend hawk watching as an activity for passengers or kids to pass the time on long trips. In fact, not only can it keep young riders occupied, but they also can practice their math if they want to calculate a ratio of the hawks seen to miles driven.

THE OTHER day, I saw only six hawks along the freeway. Many birds have moved north or to other areas. Like the bird I saw, some are sitting on eggs in their nests.

Now is the time, however, before leaves become too thick, to watch the trees for large, fist-sized nests. Sp

Hawk nests are made mostly of sticks. In contrast, squirrel nests are made mostly of leaves and globular in shape and are frequently near the outer branches of a tree.

Hawk nests are very sturdy structures and will remain intact for several years. Thus, even if you may see no hawks, you may see nests.

But if you watch closely as you drive by, you may see the head or tail of the incubating hawk peeking from the nest. That is a good sign of an active nest.

ALL HAWKS and owls are protected by law. During the past 20 years, their numbers have increased so that we can now see them on a regular basis.

If you watch for hawks as you drive, you may find them in some surprising places as well as along freeways. One evening my wife and I spotted a red-tailed hawk along Haggerty Road between the Lodge and Southfield Road. Maybe it was watching for a slow rabbit.

Timothy Nowicki works for a manufacturing firm, teaches nature study classes, and leads field trips for local outdoor groups.

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SUNDAY: Art Glass, Estate Jewelry, Oriental Rugs, Original Bronze Sculpture by Demetre Chiparus, Fine Porcelains, including Chinese Export, Antique Derby, Berlin, Steinway and Knabe Grand Pianos, Fine Paintings and watercolors by such artists as James C. Beckwith, A. Coomans, W. Everding, W.L. Hankey, Herbert Meyer, Emily M. Osborne, Edward Portielje, Jean F. Raffaelli, Alfred Seifert, Douglas A. Teed, James D. Wingfield and more

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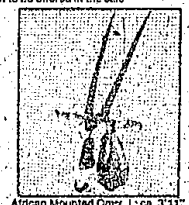

African Mounted Oryx, L: ca. 3'11", part of a fine trophy collection on Friday

Berlin porcelain plaque, signed Wagner, "KPM", 10" x 8"

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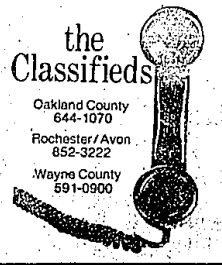

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