

Why honkers fly in 'V' formations

By Timothy Nowicki
special writer

While raking leaves from your lawn or packing apples at your favorite orchard — or just walking around town this fall — you probably have seen or heard a flock of geese flying overhead.

Now is the time when family groups of geese leave their northern nesting grounds and fly south to suitable

wintering grounds.

Most of the geese you see overhead are Canada geese (so-called "Canadian"). Canada geese breed in isolated areas throughout much of the United States, but their major breeding areas are in northern Canada.

When I was on the southern shore of Hudson Bay last summer, I saw many nests of Canada geese. These birds were some of the larger Canada geese

found in North America. The Hudson Bay birds weigh about 10 pounds, but Canada geese from different areas may range from five to 16 pounds.

SOME BIRDS we see flying south have been resting at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge near Saginaw. Other flocks may be heading to Jack Miner's Sanctuary near Kingsville in Ontario. Both places are habitual rest-

ing places where the birds weather bad storms and feed to restore their energy.

After resting and feeding, the birds take flight again in the famed "V" formation. This formation is very common for such birds as ducks, geese and swans.

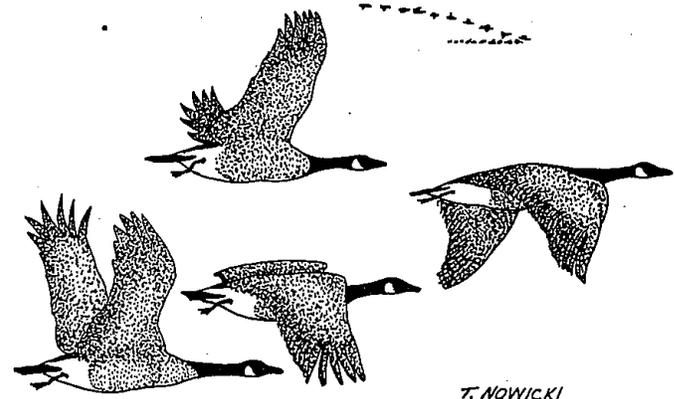
Generally an older, stronger bird leads the way and creates air currents which aid the bird behind and slightly to the side. Each bird in turn aids the bird behind it.

These air currents make it so much easier for the followers to fly that they can travel 71 percent further than a bird flying alone.

CONSERVING ENERGY is very important to these birds. They migrate 3,000 miles from northern Canada to the Gulf of Mexico.

Oddly, among Canada geese, the smaller individuals which breed farther north tend to migrate farther than the larger individuals who breed farther south.

No matter where they're from or where they're going to, the honking of a large formation of Canada geese is a sound which makes all of us stop and visually search the sky.



T. NOWICKI

An older, stronger bird leads the flight, creating air currents which aid the birds who follow.

Countess at Town Hall

"A Spy's Account of International Network" will be the topic of a lecture by the American-born Countess of Romanones (nee Aline Griffith) Nov. 14 at Pontiac-Oakland Town Hall. The 10:30 a.m. lecture will be in Roma's of Bloomfield.

Recruited from college in 1944 by the Office of Strategic Services (O.S.S.), she trained women agents in Spain during World War II until her marriage in 1948 to de Romanones Grande of Spain.

One of the most influential women of Europe, she is the only woman on the board of directors of various Spanish companies.

The author of articles on 16th century Spanish history, she restored one of her husband's palaces. She is also a Spanish representative of "Vogue" and a member of the "Ten Best Dressed Hall of Fame."

Other speakers in the 1984-85 series are Jim Hoke on "Make Your Life Happen on Purpose," Jan. 9; Mike Wendland on "A Critical Look at the Press," Feb. 13; and Ebroline on "Fashion as a Living Art," March 13.

Tickets can be purchased by sending a \$24 check and a stamped self-addressed envelope to Pontiac-Oakland Town Hall, P.O. Box 1889, Pontiac, Michigan 48065 or by calling Alice Furlong at 673-0306. To attend the \$650 celebrity luncheon call Mrs. Bart Vancelli at 673-6074.

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